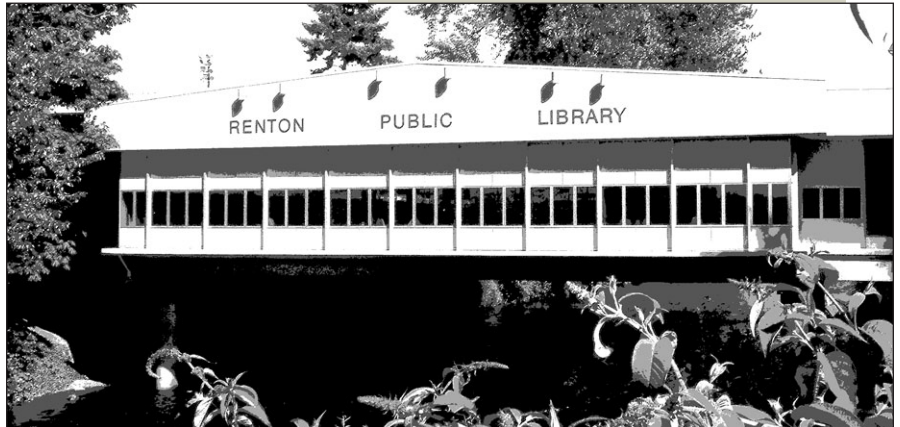


RENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



**Master Plan Study
2008-2013**

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CITY OF RENTON 2008

Denis Law, Mayor

Jay Covington, Chief Administrative Officer

RENTON CITY COUNCIL

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Randy Corman, President Pro Tem

Terri Briere

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Marcie Palmer

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Terry Higashiyama, Administrator, Community Services

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Bette Anderson, Library Director

Aaron Oesting, Assistant Library Director

Mary Fullerton, Manager, Highlands Branch Library

Laurie Finlayson, Reference Librarian

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Heather Nugent

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Marty Wine

Bette Anderson

Aaron Oesting

Mary Fullerton

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INTERVIEWS--COMMUNITY LEADERS & STAFF

Kathy Keolker, immediate past Mayor
Marcie Palmer, Community Services Advisory Committee
Randy Corman, Community Services Advisory Committee
Jay Covington, Chief Administrative Officer
Terry Higashiyama, Administrator, Community Services
Alex Pietsch, Administrator, Department of Economic Development,
Neighborhoods and Strategic Planning
Marty Heilstedt, Vice President for Instruction,
Renton Technical College
Dr. Mary Alice Heuschel, Superintendent of Renton School District

INTERVIEW—KING COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Bill Ptacek, Director, KCLS

FOCUS GROUPS

Benson Hill area residents
Business leaders
Homeless advocates
Library staff
New immigrant advocates
Renton Moms Group
Renton Public Library Board
School librarians
Seniors
Teenagers

PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD

Renton City Hall
North Highlands Neighborhood Center

PLANNING RETREAT PARTICIPANTS

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John DuBois
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Tyler Morse
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RENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY MASTER PLAN STUDY 2008-2013

Executive Summary

The City of Renton is at a major crossroads. Over the past two decades, Renton experienced tremendous growth and change. Such great changes create opportunities for new and innovative service responses.

The Renton Public Library is also at a crossroads — will the City be able to support the library programs and services that its diverse residents need, or will that be done through joining the King County Library System? The City of Renton commissioned this study to assist in assessing library service needs and priorities and developing options and recommendations to address those needs and priorities.

The Master Plan Study is the combined effort of the Library Board, staff, city administration, elected officials and community members, involved in a highly participative planning process that identified future needs for library services and facilities. It reflects the creativity, needs, and interests of the Renton community. Specific recommendations are proposed, along with the associated implementation costs. Suggestions for phasing library improvements are provided, along with major funding options.

The Planning Process

To set the context for the planning process, we began by meeting with library staff, the Library Board of Trustees, and city administrators. The strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the Renton library system were explored. The results of these discussions helped to set the stage for the next phase of the project, public meetings.

In order to develop recommendations for library services specific to the City of Renton, the process used was based on collecting information directly from residents in focus groups, general public meetings, interviews with community leaders, and a survey.

The focus groups were selected to represent specific populations within the community and included business leaders, Renton Moms Group, immigrants and new immigrant advocates, school librarians, seniors, teenagers, Benson Hill area residents, and homeless advocates. Participants discussed living and working in Renton, what changes people had seen in the city and in their lives, what challenges they currently faced and anticipated for the future, and what services the library might provide to address some of those challenges.

Two public meetings were held, one at the North Highlands Neighborhood Center, and one at the Renton City Hall. Participants were led in discussions similar to the focus groups. Attendance at the City Hall meeting was disappointing, possibly due to exceptionally fine weather that evening.

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To keep the public apprised of the process and to encourage discussion of library issues, library staff created a moderated blog on the library's webpage. Active participation in the blog was minimal, although page-view count data indicated that postings were being read.

In August 2007, we facilitated a 2-day planning retreat that included the Library Planning/Advisory Committee and the Library Board of Trustees (see List of Participants for a list of members). After reviewing all the information collected from the public meetings and surveys, participants at the retreat created a vision statement for the Renton library system and determined strategic directions outlining priorities for the library to achieve its vision and fulfill its mission. Those 6 strategic directions are the basis for the proposed recommendations.

What the Community Said

Through the focus groups, public meetings, interviews, and surveys, community members expressed their opinions about Renton and the role of the library in the community.

The community told us that the library has performed well in the role of a traditional small city library, with books, magazines, story hours for young children, friendly personalized service, and a few computers added in recent years. The library has been a valuable community asset in the Old Renton of the past.

What the Comparison Data Show

A comparison of the Renton Public Library's service levels to local, state, and national public library statistics reveals large gaps between Renton's service levels and those of other libraries both in Washington and around the nation. Renton lags far behind in the resources available to provide responsive, high quality library services needed by its growing and diverse citizenry.

Necessary Enhancements

The library must get "Ahead of the Curve" to provide the library services needed for the New Renton. It has to respond to the growth, diversity and changing needs and priorities of the community — both now and into the future.

To get "Ahead of the Curve," we recommend the City invest in a number of high-priority library improvements:

- More programs and services

- Up-to-date facilities that are warm and welcoming, where individuals and families may come to meet, study, learn, and read together

- Seven days per week services and longer open hours

- Increased outreach to schools and populations that can't or don't currently use the library

- Increased partnerships with community organizations and businesses

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Increased variety of materials in its collection

More extensive and effective marketing of library programs and services

Additional staff to provide these needed programs and services, and, specifically, staff that reflects the diversity in the Renton community

Options for the Future of the Library

We believe Renton can move “Ahead of the Curve” by developing the needed and desired library improvements in services and facilities. We see two viable options for Renton to achieve these goals:

Maintain an independent municipal library with improvements in service levels and facilities through expanded expenditure authority and a continuing reciprocal borrowing agreement with KCLS

Annex to the King County Library System (KCLS)

Recommendation

Maintain an Independent Municipal Library with Improvements in Service Levels and Facilities through Expanded Expenditure Authority and a Continuing Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement with KCLS

We recommend the City of Renton make a commitment to upgrade and enhance its library services, programs and facilities to meet the needs and expectations of its growing and diversifying citizenry.

If Renton chooses the option of joining the King County Library System, Renton residents would get modern library facilities, both established and developing services, and extensive resources from one of the wealthiest libraries in the country. However, joining the King County Library System would mean loss of local control, the possibility of only one library branch, loss of services tailored specifically for Renton, and probable higher costs per taxpayer.

The focus of this Master Plan Study is the future of library services for the citizens of Renton. The community told us their concerns and hopes for the city. We heard their voices and recommended a road map for responsive and exemplary library services. This report begins with a discussion of the need for this study, the planning process and the scope of work. Community background, growth and demographics provide a context for planning. The current Renton Public library was then compared with other libraries in the region and nationally. From that data, we identified gaps in programs and services. Community input via focus groups, surveys, stakeholder interviews and community meetings let us know the concerns and needs of the citizens of Renton. Options for the future — independence (with improvements in service levels) or KCLS — are discussed, and stages of implementation for our recommendations and costs are provided.

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CHAPTER 1

Need

This study was commissioned to assist the City of Renton in assessing library service needs and priorities and developing options and recommendations to address those needs and priorities.

Over the past two decades, Renton and the surrounding area have experienced tremendous growth and change. Immigration, economic diversification, housing development, and annexations have significantly changed the demographics and character of the city. Population changes include increasing diversity in cultures, languages, education, occupations and household characteristics. Rapid economic development and urbanization contributed their own special changes, challenges, and opportunities. In order for the city to adapt to these changes and provide excellent services, new and different responses are required.

Recognition of this fact by the Renton City Council prompted them to appropriate funds to develop a Library Master Plan that would address these challenges. The funding for this project was approved by the City Council as part of the 2006 budget.

There were a number of issues the City wanted the study to address in the process of identifying essential library services, gaps in current services and services to be changed or added. These issues can be summarized in five critical areas:

1. Libraries worldwide are in the midst of radical and rapid changes in how they provide services.

As media and services are increasingly being digitized and offered online via the Internet, libraries are changing the way they provide their services to accommodate the new ways in which people are using both information and public spaces. As people's lives get more hectic, convenient and efficient delivery of library services becomes increasingly critical to meeting their needs effectively. Access to new technology is needed and expected by library users in addition to the wide array of media they depend on the library to provide. In addition to these service expectations, many people also see the library as a community gathering place where they can meet with friends and neighbors in a relaxed neutral setting, to enjoy stimulating programs or just a quiet conversation.

2. Area demographics are changing, resulting in demand for a broader range of needs to be served in Renton.

As Potential Annexation Areas (including the recent annexation of the Benson Hill area) join Renton, the City could nearly double its population in less than five years, greatly expanding both the geographic area and the public need for new and improved library services in the community.



In addition to this rapid population growth, there has been a significant change in the characteristics of the City's population. For example, the number of individuals 25 years old or above who have completed four or more years of college is nearly twice the national average, and there are over 79 languages spoken in the Renton Public Schools, which suggests a highly diverse population with great variation in cultural background.

3. RPL facilities are aging and are not easily adapted to provide flexible, responsive and updated services.

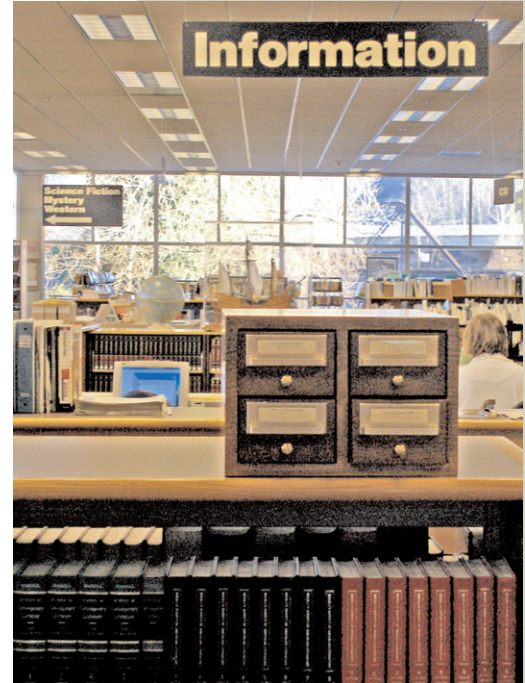
Both the downtown and Highlands library buildings are outdated and undersized. The current library facilities are 35 and 40 years old. Neither building has separate spaces for meetings, programs, or expanded technology, and there are few quiet areas for personal reading and studying. There is inadequate space for a collection of materials large enough to meet the basic needs of the community, or for accommodating various media formats and special collections. The Highlands branch in particular is too small, considering the fact that most of the population of Renton is in the Highlands area. Finally, the infrastructure of the buildings, such as electrical and computer network wiring, is inadequate to accommodate needed technology. Should new branches be added in other areas of the city or existing facilities be enlarged, remodeled, or replaced?

4. Quality library services in Renton are not sustainable at current funding levels.

For many years, library funding has been insufficient to provide all of what are generally considered to be core library services. Based on benchmarking comparisons, Renton clearly needs to increase library operating expenditures per capita. It also needs to provide for increased collections, to increase the number of American Library Association accredited Masters in Library Science degreed librarians on staff, and to establish and grow programs of all types for children, teens, adults and families.

As a result of a limited materials budget, the collection is dated, meaning the average publication date of the materials is too old. The CD collection is comprised exclusively of donations and contains little current, popular material. The collection at the Highlands contains few reference materials despite being adjacent to a large middle school. Although the library has begun to collect materials in various foreign languages that reflect the Renton community, that collection falls short of addressing the need.

The library as a whole is understaffed. Staff is not able to get time away from the public service desks to work on projects that would improve services, such as programming for the public. In addition, there is not a good pool of substitutes from which to draw when regular staff is ill or on vacation, so service to library users is



compromised. The current level of staffing has required the Highlands branch to close at 7:00pm on weekday evenings and all day on Fridays, and there are no open hours on Sundays at either branch in spite of requests from the public.

5. RPL is impacted by the nature of its relationship with the King County Library System.

A major purpose of this study is to determine the ideal library services needed for the Renton community and how to provide these services in a cost effective manner. One option for doing this is for Renton to annex to the King County Library System (KCLS). KCLS is an independent library service provider similar to school districts, fire districts and other special purpose districts. KCLS currently provides library services via 43 community libraries throughout King County in all cities but Seattle, Enumclaw and Renton, as well as outreach services via mobile units. Renton residents are currently able to use KCLS through a reciprocal borrowing agreement between the two systems.

Many Renton residents are concerned the Renton Public Library will become part of the King County Library System. This group has a strong desire to remain independent, and they view the RPL as a cornerstone of the community. They favor the personalized service they receive and the availability of many of the materials they seek. On the other hand, another group of Renton residents, as well as those in potential annexation areas, favor Renton joining KCLS to take advantage of its tremendous resources, collections, and programming.

This annexation option and the current relationship between the City of Renton and the King County Library System are significant factors that will need to be explored in the process of making any decision about library service provision in Renton.

The City of Renton and its residents highly value flexible, modern, personalized services and expect no less from their public library. This study provides recommendations on how that can be achieved.

CHAPTER 2

The Planning Process

The Study for the Renton Public Library Master Plan 2008-2013 is the combined effort of the Library Board, staff, elected officials, city administration, and community members. It reflects the creativity, needs, and interests of the Renton community.

The planning project grew out of the desire of the City of Renton and the Renton Public Library Board of Trustees to develop a Master Plan that resolves the issues identified in Chapter 1 and that guides the library into the future. The Master Plan Study conclusions and recommendations are based on a highly participative process. The study identifies future needs for library services and facilities and makes specific recommendations, with associated costs, for implementation strategies such as funding options and phasing of improvements.

The Renton Public Library Planning/Advisory Committee considered the library's current services, programs, and facilities in light of community needs and resources. Planning participants evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the library as well as the opportunities and threats in the library's environment. They also identified the master directions and goals the library should or may undertake in order to provide the appropriate library services for this community over the next five years.

The City of Renton and the Renton Public Library Board of Trustees want the Renton Public Library to provide customer focused, high quality, cost effective, and well managed services to Renton residents. The City of Renton commissioned us to conduct a study to facilitate the development of a master plan to pursue those goals and to guide the Renton Public Library into the future.

The Master Plan Study process included:

A review and analysis of community data, including demographics, 2000 census and updates, growth projections, economic forecasts, transportation patterns

A study of other community service/educational agencies and the identification of potential partnerships

An analysis and benchmarking of current library service levels, including staffing and hours of operation

A functional analysis of the library facilities

A needs assessment of the community using seven focus groups: teens, seniors, mothers, school librarians, the business community, Benson Hill residents, and representatives of the immigrant community

Data gathered at two public meetings, one held at the City Hall and another at the North Highlands Neighborhood Center



Data gathered from interviews with community stakeholders, including former Mayor Kathy Keolker; Jay Covington, Chief Administrative Officer; Terry Higashiyama, Administrator, Community Services; Alex Pietsch, Administrator, Department of Economic Development, Neighborhoods, and Strategic Planning; Terry Vickers, Community Programs Coordinator, Renton Police Department, Crime Prevention Unit; Renton School District Superintendent Dr. Mary Alice Heuschel; Marty Heilstedt, Vice President for Instruction, Renton Technical College; Bill Ptacek, Director, King County Library System; representatives of agencies that serve the homeless; and the City Council Community Services Committee

An online survey of citizens who were provided the opportunity to answer the survey at home or using the library's computers

A paper version of the online survey made available at both libraries, the Senior Center and the community centers

The Master Plan Study includes:

An analysis of data collected and the development of a library vision and service priorities to develop a picture of the “ideal library services for the citizens of Renton”

An analysis of the best way to provide those “ideal services” through a range of scenarios, future service levels, and service delivery approaches

A phased implementation plan

Financial implications of the proposed recommendations with funding strategies



CHAPTER 3

Renton in Brief

The City of Renton is experiencing rapid changes in many areas, including population, economy, and physical structure. When asked to identify the major changes in Renton, community members listed growth of population in terms of numbers and diversity. They also noted the growth in business and housing developments.

Claritas estimates the growth from 1990-2000 was 17.76%, from 2000-2005 was 10.31%, and from 2005-2010 will be 8.83%. They projected the 2010 population at 60,085 in the city proper. OFM's April 1, 2007 (2006 data) estimate for the population of Renton is 60,290. Based on the OFM estimates, the city population growth has already exceeded the Claritas projection for 2010 and grew 20% from 2000-2007, a faster rate than most other areas in Washington and twice the overall state growth. Some of that population growth has been from annexations, but mostly from newcomers.¹ According to Alex Pietsch, Renton's Administrator of the Department of Economic Development, Neighborhoods, and Strategic Planning, the price of housing in Seattle and Bellevue has driven people to Renton, and growth in job opportunities has brought new populations.

With rapid growth and the annexation of Benson Hill, Renton's population recently jumped to over 76,000. Renton's additional Potential Annexation Areas could add population of approximately 45,000 in the following numbers: East Renton Plateau (including Briarwood and Maplewood Heights) — 8,700; Fairwood — 21,856; and West Hill (including Skyway, Bryn Mawr, Lakeridge, Campbell Hill, & others) — 14,300. (City of Renton website). If all these areas annex to Renton, the Renton population would soon be over 120,000. In the context of both annexations and in-city population growth, we believe library services should be planned for a population of 150,000.

Renton's vision is to be the center of opportunity in the Puget Sound Region where families and businesses thrive. Its mission is to partner with residents, businesses, and schools to:

- Provide a healthy, welcoming atmosphere where citizens choose to live, raise families and take pride in their community

- Promote planned growth and economic vitality

- Create a positive work environment

- Meet service demands through innovation and commitment to excellence

1. Since 1971, Claritas has been a source of accurate, up-to-date demographic data and target marketing research information about the population, consumer behavior, consumer spending, market segments, households, and businesses within any specific geographic target market area in the United States. Claritas is a Nielsen company.



The city's goal is to make urban places livable by making connections and providing easy access between the places where people live and work and to support quality developments. Renton's business plan goals include promoting citywide economic development and neighborhood revitalization. The city plans to manage growth through sound urban planning and to meet the service demands that contribute to the livability of the community.

Economic Picture

In an effort to increase and diversify the tax base, the city's Economic Development, Neighborhoods and Strategic Planning Department has worked in concert with the business community to actively promote and develop economic activity in the city. A recent study, City of Renton Economic Forecast 2007-2008 by Douglas Pederson and Associates on March 30, 2007, indicates that Renton is expected to continue to expand the community's vibrant economy. Throughout the past 5 years, Renton has worked hard to shed its image as a blue collar city trapped in the past. New housing and retail developments are currently under construction or are in the early planning stages.

The downtown core has seen the biggest impact of revitalization throughout the past few years, as a new transit center and many high-end condominiums were constructed. The biggest commercial development in city history is currently under construction along the south shores of Lake Washington near Boeing. Known as "The Landing," this 68-acre urban development will bring many new restaurants and retailers to the city. In 2007, construction of over \$350 million in improvements to the I-405, SR 167 corridor through Renton began. Renton's taxable retail sales increased by almost 10 percent in 2006 and are expected to increase another 7.5 percent in 2007.

At the same time, the Pederson and Associates Economic Forecast reports that despite its population and retail spending growth, employment growth in Renton has been flat. This is the result of swings in employment at Boeing, and stronger housing activity in Renton relative to the rest of the economy. Total employment was virtually unchanged between 1990 and 2006. Job creation in other industries offset losses in Boeing jobs.

Renton has attracted large corporations and well known organizations. A major reason businesses choose to locate in Renton is its educated workforce and a variety of training opportunities. Within the Renton community, the number of individuals 25 years old or above who have completed four or more years of college is nearly twice the national average. There are six four-year colleges and universities and eight community and technical colleges within a 25-mile radius of Renton. Both Renton Technical College and City University have campuses in Renton.

The future looks bright in Renton. Some forecast highlights are:

The city's population growth rate will average more than twice the King County pace

The number of housing permits issued in Renton grew 55% from 1999 through 2005 versus 12% for King County

Current unfilled orders of Boeing 737's total 1,449 equal to 4.5 years of production

During the next few years Renton is projected to experience more robust growth across-the-board, as faster job creation lifts both population and taxable retail trade sales

Renton's retail sales tax collection will increase an estimated 7.5% in 2007, not counting the effect of The Landing

Glenn Pascal, regional economist and Senior Fellow at the University of Washington, believes that Renton is poised to become a technology magnet in the region. Pascal cited Renton's relatively affordable land costs, the large portion of unincorporated King County that may annex into the city, the growing population, and the diversity of Renton residents as contributors to the city's strategic position. However, Pascal cited the city's pro-business climate and the demonstrated ability of the city, business leaders, and educators to work together as the most important reason for the city's strong strategic positioning.²

Education in Renton

The Renton School District serves over 13,000 students in preschool through twelfth grade. Four high schools, 3 middle schools, 13 elementary schools, an early childhood education center, and various other special program locations constitute the accredited preschool-12 system. Creating life-long learners is at the heart of the Renton School District's instructional goals. Students are encouraged to reach for excellence through a variety of programs that focus on basic academic skills, problem solving, creative and critical thinking, and social and emotional growth.

Changes in the Renton Schools reflect the changing demographics of the city. The 2000 census showed that roughly 853 Renton families and 4,798 Renton individuals were below the poverty line, including 13.5% of those under age 18 and 8.4% of age 65 or over. The Renton School District also reported an increase in the number of students on the Free & Reduced Lunch program. Home to people from a wide



2. Glenn Pascal Remarks to the Renton Chamber of Commerce, November 8, 2006.

range of economic, educational and cultural backgrounds, Renton experiences many of the challenges and opportunities inherent in serving such a diverse population. According to School Superintendent Dr. Mary Alice Heuschel, there are over 79 languages spoken in the Renton Public Schools.

The City of Renton and Renton School District joined forces in 1995 to create Communities in Schools of Renton. This local nonprofit organization leverages the resources of businesses, churches, colleges, health care providers, city programs, and social services agencies to address the needs of children and families. The result has been a powerful network of services to enhance students' basic education through their involvement in activities such as the Mentors Project, the Readiness to Learn Family Support Project, and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers After-School Program.

In addition to the Renton School District, the city is home to a number of private schools such as St. Anthony's School and Renton Christian School. There are also a number of families that choose to educate their children by homeschooling.

For 60 years, Renton Technical College has provided the opportunity for training, retraining and upgrading skills. As the community has grown and changed, Renton Technical College has followed suit, offering exciting new programs and keeping abreast of cutting-edge technologies that have reshaped the workplace. Renton Technical College is one of 34 colleges in the State of Washington operated by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Renton Technical College's mission is to prepare a diverse student population for work, fulfilling the employment needs of individuals, business, and industry. Approximately 16,000 students choose Renton Technical College each year as the place to learn a new skill. Businesses utilize the College's resources through customized training delivered either on campus or at the workplace. Instructors come directly from industry to the classroom so students are assured of learning current practices and technologies in their chosen field.

Both Renton Technical College and area schools offer the potential to work in partnership with the Renton Public Library in providing life-long learning opportunities to local residents. While public libraries must collect materials that meet the wide-ranging interests of the general public and not focus specifically on school curricula, it is by working in partnership with local schools and colleges to provide programs and services that the greater educational needs of students of all ages can be met.



CHAPTER 4

Community Participation

This Master Plan Study is based on a highly participative process that included a needs assessment of the community using methods such as focus groups, public meetings, and interviews with community leaders, as well as opportunities for library staff and trustees to participate.

An electronic survey on the library's web page offered anyone in the community the opportunity to provide input. Most survey responses came from library users. Although the library publicized all the focus groups, public meetings and the survey, we know these public participation opportunities didn't reach all segments of the community. It is difficult to achieve full participation in any public process.

Community Participation Opportunities

Community Group	Method
Benson Hill area residents	Focus group
Business leaders	Focus group
City administrators and elected officials	Interviews
Community leaders	Interviews
Homeless Advocates	Interviews
Immigrants & Immigrant advocates	Focus group
King County Library System	Interview
Library staff	Focus groups
Renton community residents	Two public meetings, online survey, online blog
Renton Moms Group	Focus group
Renton Public Library Board	Focus group
School librarians	Focus group
Seniors	Focus group
Teenagers	Focus group



What Community Members Discussed

Through the focus groups, public meetings, interviews, and surveys, community members expressed their opinions about Renton and the role of the library in the community. They discussed their views about Renton, including major changes, strengths, raising families in Renton, concerns, and issues. Participants cited a number of strengths including that Renton has an incredible foundation of partnerships and does an excellent job of leveraging those partnerships. Mothers, in particular, believe that Renton is a very good place to raise families. The major changes mentioned by most people in all groups were: increasing community diversity, growth and development, local economic growth, and more pride about living in Renton.

Residents discussed where they get reading materials and information, what they would like to see at the library, and what the library can do to promote programs and services.

When asked where they get their information, most community members replied: “the Internet.” But they also said the library is used to find reading materials, attend children’s programs, get local information and magazines, and access online databases. People also come to study, meet and use the public access computers. Residents were generally positive about both the community and the library. Most residents expressed a growing diverse citizenry as the greatest challenge to Renton.

What the Community Said — Library Strengths

In general, community members told us that the library has performed well in the role of a traditional small city library, with books, magazines, story hours for young children, friendly personalized service, and a few computers added in recent years. Specific strengths:

The library has a strong reputation in the community.

Many residents value the small town feel of the library and the personalized services they receive.

The downtown library building is well-loved.

The library building, built on a bridge, is very appealing, is in the “heart of the community,” and represents Renton. The location in a park is very attractive. There is plenty of parking, two schools are nearby, and the library is on a bus route.

The print collections are strong.

The library’s collection, although somewhat dated, is sound in many areas. The Pacific Northwest collection is a unique strength of the library. Patrons often find the materials they want on the shelf, and when materials are unavailable, there is a short wait list. The library is responsive to acquiring the materials that patrons request.



Programming for young children is strong.

The library has a history of providing excellent programs for young children and for building relationships with the public schools that serve younger children.

The library has worked diligently to keep up with new technology and to provide computer resources for its residents, including Wireless Internet.

The library has developed excellent partnerships with some community organizations.

What the Community Said — Library Improvements Needed

Many community members believe that the library has to be more than a place to get books. It needs to be a place to go and a place to be, an inviting place like the bookstores with a coffee shop. The teens especially suggested the library have listening stations like those provided at some bookstores. Participants also think the library needs to establish a marketing program to educate community members about all of the resources available to them.

Facilities. Almost unanimously, community members stated that both branches of the library are too small and look dated. They would like to see changes such as:

- Enlarged and updated library buildings
- Community rooms for programs
- Rooms for meetings/studying/classes
- Outreach services, such as a bookmobile or van to visit the homebound or outlying neighborhoods
- Drive-up window
- A “café type place” where patrons can read in a relaxed environment
- Laptop plug-ins

Hours. There is need for seven-day-a-week service and more hours at both branches, especially on Fridays, evenings, and weekends in the Highlands to accommodate the needs of working people.

Staffing. The Renton Public Library needs additional staff to provide more open hours, to develop and deliver more programming, and to increase the library’s marketing efforts. There is also a need for staff that speak other languages so that patrons with limited English language skills can obtain the services they need.



Programming is the area in which citizens expressed the most need. Examples of what they asked for:

- More activities for school-aged children
- Activities for teens
- Programs/activities for adults
- ESL materials and classes at the library
- Book discussion programs and author appearances
- Homework help to assist students with their school work
- Inter-generational programming
- Orientation to library services and procedures for all residents and special orientations for immigrant populations
- Parenting classes, such as early literacy, and a parenting resources section that includes, for example, information on finding good childcare
- Increased outreach, such as to both public and private schools and to those who don't use the library
- Increased partnerships with community organizations and businesses
- Business leaders expressed the desire for the library to help people develop competencies necessary for work in a business environment.

Materials. The community would like to have a broader and deeper collection of library materials, including an increased variety of formats.

- Additional computer resources, including downloadable audiovisual content and electronic books
- An expanded video collection
- More foreign language materials in both print and audiovisual formats
- Larger selection of materials that appeal to teens
- Participants suggested that the public library attend to the outside reading books assigned by the schools. They also requested that the library obtain the reading list from each high school and have those books available.

Technology. Both branches need additional computers to meet the needs of adults and youth. Many participants discussed the long wait times for an available computer.



Security. Considering concerns about public safety in the downtown core, participants feel that additional security may be needed at the downtown branch and suggested the library install security cameras in the parking lot.

Marketing. The library needs more extensive and effective marketing of library programs and services to residents. Many residents are not aware of services the library currently provides.

Partnerships. Participants feel the library can accomplish more by working in partnership with other community organizations and agencies to leverage the strengths and assets of each to increase their overall impact. Considering the changing demographic landscape of Renton and the importance of economic development, partnering with the business community and supporting their expressed need for a literate and continually learning workforce is one example. Similarly, collaboration with the Renton Technical College in support of its mission to prepare individuals for employment is another partnership opportunity that should be explored, and the college expressed an interest in such a relationship.

Public and private school partnerships, while existing, could be enhanced to increase and encourage literacy as well as support students' academic success.

Independence for Renton Public Library (RPL) vs. Joining King County Library System (KCLS)

There were strong opinions expressed by those who want RPL to remain a part of the City of Renton and those who would like to see Renton join the King County Library System. RPL supporters like the personalized and friendly service the library offers. Families with home-schooled children in particular like the library's special services. A participant mentioned that RPL's real strength is local history, which KCLS does not collect. KCLS supporters like the resources, breadth of the materials collection, the programming and the technology available at KCLS libraries. A few asked that the city look at comparative hours, staffing, collections, computers, programs, and costs.

Some questioned the ability of the City of Renton to financially support needed changes to the library and stated that the city needs to increase the library's resources.

CHAPTER 5

Looking to the Future — Vision, Mission, and Goals

The Library Board of Trustees and the Library Planning/Advisory Committee worked together on future directions for the Renton Public Library, culminating in a two day Library Planning Retreat at Renton City Hall. Library Planning Retreat participants reviewed and synthesized much data, including: 1) background and history of Renton; 2) demographic, social and economic trends in Renton; 3) background, history and services of the Renton Public Library; 4) comparisons with other Washington and U.S. libraries; and 5) all the input gathered from Renton citizens at large and key Renton community stakeholders — collected via the interviews, focus groups, public meetings and surveys. In the context of all this data, the retreat participants then created a vision statement for the Renton Public Library and determined strategic directions outlining priorities for the library to achieve its vision and to fulfill its mission.

Library Vision

A convenient, welcoming, community and information center that reflects the interests and diversity of Renton, that provides personal service and serves as a gateway to lifelong learning, economic development, cultural literacy, creative pursuits, recreation, and techno-literacy.

Library Mission

Renton Public Library supports lifelong learning for the public by anticipating and responding to community needs for information, and by inspiring and encouraging the community's desire to read.

Strategic Directions

The Public Library Association, a division of the American Library Association, has developed a list of strategic directions commonly used by public libraries to describe the service priorities determined to be most reflective of their community's needs. From that list, the following strategic directions were selected as priorities for the Renton Public Library to achieve its vision and fulfill its mission.

Visit a Comfortable Place

The citizens of Renton will have a safe and welcoming physical place to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read. They will also have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

Welcome to the United States

New immigrants will receive assistance in adjusting to the United States through access to the information needed to participate successfully in American life.



Connect to the Online World

Through the library, the residents of Renton will connect to the digital world, receiving access with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to insure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.

Create Young Readers

Children will attend programs and use services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, listen, succeed in school and to develop lifelong learning behaviors.

Teens will have a place in the community that gives them a sense of ownership, participation and importance. They will meet, attend programs, study and access information and reading materials.

Satisfy Curiosity and Stimulate Imagination

Citizens of Renton will have the resources to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives. They will also have access to materials to enhance their leisure time.

Build Successful Enterprises

The City of Renton will receive support in economic development through library partnerships with agencies and organizations to provide resources to businesses and non-profit organizations that will help develop and maintain strong, viable organizations.

Goals and Objectives

The Renton Public Library Planning Retreat participants developed the following goals for realizing the selected priorities:

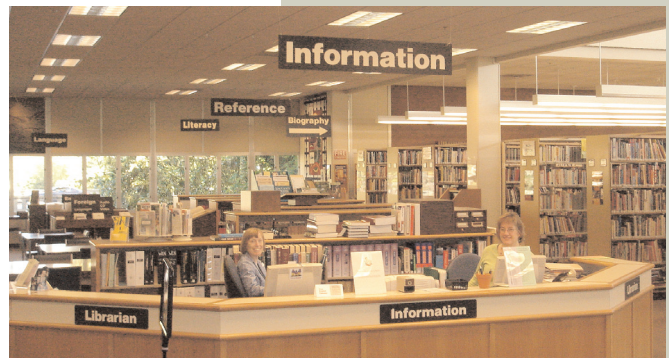
GOAL 1

The Renton Public Library will provide safe and welcoming physical places for residents to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

OBJECTIVES

1A.

- Remodel existing building space for more effective use
- Provide an up-to-date environment
- Provide meeting rooms for public use and library programs
- Provide comfortable seating throughout the library
- Provide a café for the public
- Provide a gallery or exhibit space
- Provide performance space



Install a drive up window

Install a drive up covered book drop

Provide more zoned areas within the existing space, e.g., for quiet reading, or private computer use

Re-design existing spaces for better accessibility, flow, sight lines, adjacencies, security, etc.

Provide service hours that match the needs of the community, including evening and Sunday hours

1B.

Acquire additional space

Build a new branch in the Highlands

Acquire appropriate spaces for serving PAAs as they annex

Consider specialized branches — e.g. for music (listening, production, etc.), meeting rooms, school help, small popular collection with technology only

Consider co-locations to make facilities convenient (one-stop shopping concept)

Explore additional building locations

1C.

Develop and maintain the virtual library through the library's web page

Provide a virtual branch with dedicated staff with a variety of blogs, wikis, and other opportunities for social networking

Provide a wide range of electronic gaming opportunities

Maintain the library events Web page

GOAL 2

The Renton Public Library will assist new immigrants in adjusting to the United States by providing information needed to participate successfully in American life.

OBJECTIVES:

2A.

Provide library materials that respond to the needs of new immigrants and distribute materials developed by community organizations for new immigrants

2B.

Provide relevant classes and activities for new immigrants

Offer ESL classes

Offer citizenship classes

Offer ESL patrons talk times and conversational support

Provide self-guided programs that use books and media to help adults and teens with limited English skills become proficient in English

Provide private space for tutors to work one-on-one with English language learning literacy students

2C.

Develop a comprehensive web site with links to a wide variety of resources for new immigrants

2D.

Engage in outreach activities to new immigrants, including presentations to groups of new immigrants in off-site locations

GOAL 3

The Renton Public Library will serve as a connection to the digital world, providing access to that world for all residents.

OBJECTIVES

3A.

Provide equipment that enables connection to the digital world

Provide up-to-date technology that STAYS up to date

Provide computers, printers and high speed and wireless access to the Internet

Provide desks suited to laptops/network jacks

Provide touch screens with multiple languages

3B

Provide opportunities for patrons to learn to access and effectively utilize the digital world

Establish a computer lab

Provide technology classes

3C.

Provide the software and applications that allow for maximum use of digital resources by patrons

Provide an Integrated Library System with a universal search engine

Provide a diverse range of computer accessible resources, including digital books



GOAL 4

The Renton Public Library will provide to children from birth to age five programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

OBJECTIVES:

4A.

Provide programming for pre-school children that is comprehensive and inclusive

Present regularly scheduled story programs divided by age of intended audience.

Present story programs in small groups with age appropriate programs

Present story programs in off-site locations, such as day care centers, parks, hospitals, etc.

4B.

Support parents and caregivers in their promotion of literacy

Develop themed reading packets that include a variety of media for parents and caregivers to use with children

Participate in blogs for new parents

Provide classes on early literacy for parents and caregivers

4C.

Provide special programs that encourage reading and literacy

Sponsor a Born to Read program

4D.

Provide extensive resources in all formats for pre-school children

Provide computers with appropriate programs for preschool children

GOAL 5

The Renton Public Library will provide the resources for patrons to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

OBJECTIVES:

5A.

Provide library materials that support lifelong learning

Provide a broad and deep collection including downloadable content such as E-audio books and video

Provide software for check-out

Develop and increase the DVD and CD collections

5B.

Create learning aids that guide and assist patrons in their pursuit of lifelong learning

Develop electronic pathfinders to help people find information on topics of interest to them

Provide homework help to students at all levels

5C.

Provide programs and classes on a wide range of topics of interest to various age groups in the community

Work with local organizations to co-sponsor programs on topics of interest to various age groups

Provide creative writing classes

5D.

Establish displays and exhibits that promote lifelong learning

Display items created by local residents or items from personal collections.

Create displays on topics of current interest that promote library materials

5E.

Provide access and resources for online adult education

Provide access to adult education courses through distance learning or video-on-demand

Explore community radio/partners with Puget Sound Access for downloadable media (pod casts)

GOAL 6

The Renton Public Library will provide materials to enhance its patrons' leisure time

OBJECTIVES:

6A.

Provide assistance to patrons searching for leisure time resources

Provide readers' advisory services to assist users to locate materials of interest

Display new materials in a prominent location

6B.

Provide a wide range of library resources for leisure time use

Provide games and host gaming tournaments

Provide materials in a variety of formats including both traditional and downloadable media

6C.

- Provide programming for the promotion of recreational reading
- Provide an online reading club
- Present programs on new books and particular genres and sponsor author visits
- Present a summer reading program for children
- Present a teen reading program in the summer
- Present several adult reading programs throughout the year

6D.

- Provide equipment for patrons to use various media in the library
- Provide listening and viewing stations to allow users to preview materials

GOAL 7

The Renton Public Library will work with businesses and non-profit organizations to provide resources needed to develop and maintain strong, viable organizations.

OBJECTIVES:

7A.

- Develop and maintain resources for the business community
- Develop and maintain a web site with links to resources for business and links to resources for not-for-profit managers and board members
- Establish and maintain a business collection in the library
- Establish and maintain a grants center in the library
- Provide paper and electronic copies of local ordinances that affect businesses, including zoning, local census projects, development plans, etc.
- Provide specialized reference support to businesses

7B.

- Present programs, workshops and seminars for community organizations and businesses
- Sponsor or co-sponsor workshops and seminars on topics of interest to business and not-for-profit organizations
- Provide podcast, videocast, RSS feed, or wikis on business related topics and topics of interest to not-for-profit staff and boards

7C.

Provide outreach to the business community

Make presentations to local business organizations about the library's business-related services and programs

GOAL 8

The Renton Public Library will maintain existing and develop new partnerships with community organizations, agencies, and businesses.

OBJECTIVES:

8A.

Strengthen and maintain partnerships with educational and non-profit entities, such as Renton Technical College

8B.

Strengthen and develop partnerships with the business community

8C.

Provide outreach to parents and other such potential partners

8D.

Establish a group of library volunteers such as a "Friends of the Library" organization

GOAL 9

The Renton Public Library will maintain a staff that allows for the meeting of all of the Library's goals.

OBJECTIVES:

9A.

Maintain an adequate and qualified staff for each library facility

Evaluate current staffing levels

Maintain a staff that is welcoming, flexible, is aware of trends, and is open to change

Maintain a staff that is comfortable with new technologies

Ensure there is sufficient computer/technology specialist personnel to provide timely support and resources for staff and patrons

Ensure expert reference staff are available to support all segments of the community, including the business community

Increase opportunities for staff training and professional development, allowing staff to acquire appropriate customer service skills and maintain up-to-date technical skills

9B.

Maintain a staff that represents the diversity of the community, including the languages and cultures included in the community.

A Vision of Library Service in Renton in 2013.

In 2013, the citizens of Renton will enjoy a wide range of library services made available to them in up-to-date, spacious and welcoming library branches, through outreach services, and through a connection to the online world. Library programs will respond to the needs of new immigrants, will help young children become lifelong readers, will satisfy the curiosity and stimulate imagination for residents of all ages, and will help build successful enterprises.

The City of Renton will stand as a model of investment in its city through excellent library services.



CHAPTER 6

Gap Analysis

Major gaps identified between current and ideal levels of Renton Public Library’s Services

To respond to the demands and needs of citizens of Renton, there must be improvements in both the facilities and the services of the Renton Public Library. To analyze building needs, we did a systematic review of the functioning of each library facility, noting any gaps between current levels of functioning and necessary improvements. In the charts that follow we list the functional elements of each facility with our recommendations for any changes. Then we compared the services of Renton Public Library with the services of public libraries in similar communities.

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Renton Public Library—Main Downtown Branch

Location: 100 Mill Avenue South

Renton, Wa 98057

Regular Hours:

Monday to Thursday: 10:00 am to 9:00 pm

Friday and Saturday: 10:00 am to 6:00 pm

Sunday: Closed



Components	Existing	Recommended
Size	inadequate	redesign (and add space at other sites)
Collection	too small (& not sufficiently reflective of community)	re-evaluate, increase & vary
Seating	insufficient	add
Computers	insufficient	rearrange and add
Privacy	insufficient	rearrange for more privacy
Storytelling	in public area	put in program/meeting room
Program/Meeting Room	meeting room is now storage/work area	reclaim existing meeting room
Group Study/Tutoring	0	in program/meeting room
Teen Area	0	ideal to create
Quiet Reading Area	insufficient	redesign
Traffic flow	inadequate--esp. with huge circ desk in center	redesign
Sight lines	inadequate	redesign
Staff spaces	inadequate	redesign
Interior Space Plan	inadequate	redesign
Infrastructure, e.g., wiring	inadequate	audit & upgrade
HVAC	some issues with heating	audit, make changes
Lighting	review	review, make changes
Storage	insufficient	redesign
Safety	possible issues	create clearer sight lines to restrooms
Maintenance	building built 1966, issues of aging	audit, perform maintenance
Accessibility—inside	some issues	audit, make changes
Accessibility—outside	good	evaluate directional signage
Parking	good	monitor
Location relative to population	pros & cons--attractive location but not population center	keep for library use

facilities analysis

Highlands Branch Library

Address: 2902 NE 12th Street
Renton, WA 98056

Regular Hours:

Monday to Thursday: 10:00 am to 7:00 pm

Friday: Closed

Saturday: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Sunday: Closed



Components	Existing	Recommended
Size	inadequate	redesign & add space at this site or elsewhere
Collection	too small, space inadequate	add space & collection
Seating	insufficient	review in space planning
Computers	insufficient numbers	add
Privacy	insufficient	rearrange for more privacy
Storytelling	in public area	put in program/meeting room
Program/Meeting Room	program/meeting room is now computer area	review in space planning
Group Study/Tutoring	0	review in space planning
Teen Area	0	review in space planning
Quiet Reading Area	0	review in space planning
Traffic flow	crowded spaces	redesign in space planning
Sight lines	inadequate	redesign in space planning
Staff spaces	inadequate	review in space planning
Interior Space Plan	inadequate	redesign in space planning
Infrastructure, e.g., wiring	inadequate	audit & upgrade
HVAC	some issues, esp. with air circulation	audit, make changes
Lighting	inadequate	redesign in space planning
Storage	insufficient	redesign in space planning
Safety	issues due to crowded conditions	review in space planning
Maintenance	building aging	audit, perform maintenance as necessary
Accessibility—inside	some issues, many insufficient clearances	audit, make changes
Accessibility—outside	good	evaluate directional signage
Parking	good, until programs increase	monitor
Location relative to population	good, near population center	redesign & add space at this site or elsewhere

facilities analysis

Comparisons of Renton Public Library Resources and Services via Benchmark Statistics

We have measured the Renton Public Library according to specified statistics in order to compare it with other public libraries in the U.S. and the region. The statistics chosen are the most common readily measurable statistics to indicate library service levels (inputs and outputs). These statistics generally correlate with service levels and library use in communities and have been used over time to compare public libraries with one another. Statistics can mean different things in different settings, so these numbers need to be used only as indicators.

A comparison of the Renton Public Library's resources and service levels to local, state, and national public library statistics assists in identifying gaps and developing target goals in areas chosen by the Library. Federal and state databases of public library statistics were used to draw multiple peer group samples, and those samples were used to compare the library with similar types of library operations. The most recent national statistics available were published in 2005, so comparison data is from year 2004.

The statistics used in this report are from a variety of sources.

U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Educational Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics. (<http://nces.ed.gov/>)

Washington Public Library Statistics 2005
<http://www.secstate.wa.gov/library/libraries/libDev/downloads/statistics/05stats/pdf/stats05.pdf>

Renton Public Library (RPL)

Based on the statistics presented in the Comparative Benchmark Analyses Report, we can summarize how Renton compares in library resources and services and identify possible gaps in Renton's library services. It is clear from the comparative statistics that there are substantial gaps in many areas between what Renton provides and what other similarly situated libraries provide.

Summary Comparison of Renton Public Library to other Washington Libraries

Identification of Gaps

For relevant gap analysis, we compared Renton Public Library with a sample of libraries in Washington communities with similar populations, plus those Renton compared itself with in the past — a total of seven libraries. While the RPL legal service area population in 2004 was 55,360, the average for the comparison group was 55,661.

Renton Public Library compared with a sample of libraries

	Population of Legal Service Area
Comparison Group Average	55,661
State Average (WA)	91,580
National Average	31,143
Renton Public Library, WA	55,360
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	27,720
Puyallup Public Library, WA	35,690
Richland Public Library, WA	42,660
Longview Public Library, WA	49,740
North Olympic Library System, WA	65,900
Bellingham Public Library, WA	71,080
Everett Public Library, WA	96,840

The full analysis shows Renton well below the other libraries in nearly every category, with less expenditure authority for materials, programs and staff to provide library services to city residents. The most dramatic example is the huge gap between the number of programs offered in Renton and those offered at other libraries. Renton is 68% below the comparison group in total number of programs presented. This gap in number of programs is a reflection both of the lack of available staff as well as lack of available meeting space. A summary comparing Renton to the Washington comparison group average reveals the following gaps.

Renton Public Library is:

- 30% below the WA comparison group average in Total Revenue per capita
- 32% below the WA comparison group average in Total Operating Expenditure per capita
- 24% below the WA comparison group average in Salaries & Wages Expenditures

8% below the WA comparison group average in accredited masters degree librarians per 1,000 population

8% below the WA comparison group average in print materials per capita

10% below the WA comparison group average in video materials per 1,000 population

6% above the WA comparison group average for the number of public service hours per outlet

68% below the WA comparison group average for the total number of programs

26% below the WA comparison group average for the total circulation per capita

81% below the WA comparison group average for the number of computer databases

Summary Comparison of Renton Public Library to other U.S. Libraries

Identification of Gaps

If we compare Renton to the national group of libraries in similar metropolitan areas, some of the gaps are even larger.

In the following comparisons, we used a sample of 37 U.S. libraries that have populations similar to Renton and are situated near a major metropolitan area.

Library Name	Revenue per Capita	Operating Expenditures per Capita	Salaries & Wages Expenditures	ALA-MLS Librarians per 1,000 Pop.	Print Materials per Capita	Video Materials per 1,000 Pop.	Average Number of Weekly Public Service Hours Per Outlet	Total Library Programs	Total Circulation per Capita
Comparison Group Average	\$52.58	\$48.86	\$1,436,967	0.19	3.71	234.36	50	1,066	10.88
State Average (WA)	\$36.92	\$34.42	\$2,770,859	0.10	5.98	276.40	36	732	9.44
National Average	\$33.40	\$31.33	\$789,861	0.08	6.50	285.19	39	334	8.30
Renton Public Library	\$27.68	\$26.09	\$904,035	0.11	3.13	194.94	54	133	9.24

Comparing Renton to this national sample of metropolitan communities, the Renton Public Library is:

47% below the U.S. comparison group average in Total Revenue per capita

47% below the U.S. comparison group average in Total Operating Expenditure per capita

37% below the U.S. comparison group average in Salaries & Wages Expenditures

42% below the U.S. comparison group average in accredited master's level librarians per 1,000 population

16% below the U.S. comparison group average in print materials per capita

17% below the U.S. comparison group average in video materials per 1,000 population

8% above the U.S. comparison group average for the number of public service hours per outlet

88% below the U.S. comparison group average for the total number of programs

15% below the U.S. comparison group average for the total circulation per capita

85% below the U.S. comparison group average for the number of computer databases

These comparisons reveal large gaps in the resources and services that Renton Public Library provides to its community. Analysis of the gaps provides important information in developing library services for the future.

The one area in which Renton is slightly above the comparison groups' averages is number of public service hours per outlet, despite being below average for librarian staffing. However, Renton residents have requested additional public service hours, specifically Sunday hours at the downtown library, and evenings and Fridays at the Highlands branch.

CHAPTER 7

Closing the Gaps — Options for Future of Library Services for the New Renton

We believe Renton can move “Ahead of the Curve” by developing the needed and desired improvements in library services and facilities. We see two viable options for Renton to achieve these goals.

Option 1. Improve service levels as an independent municipal library through an expanded expenditure authority and with a continued reciprocal borrowing agreement with the King County Library System

Option 2. Annex to the King County Library System

Option 1. Improve Service Levels as an Independent Municipal Library with expanded expenditure authority

The recommendations in this option reflect Renton’s long history of independence, local pride and control, and responsive customer services tailored to the community. These recommendations would enable the Renton Public Library to provide the responsive, cost effective services needed and requested by the citizens of Renton.

Renton’s current population is approximately 76,562. If Potential Annexation Areas are added to the city over the next several years, the projected population of Renton would total over 125,000. Based on these numbers, library services can safely be planned for a population of 150,000.

Our recommendations call for two stages to allow for a reasonable building and development program. In the initial stage, existing buildings would be remodeled for updating and the most effective use of space. Outreach would be developed through a newly purchased van, and sites would be explored for providing service to the newly annexed Benson Hill community. The second stage involves maintaining the downtown branch, building a new branch building and opening a rent-ed space in the Benson Hill area.

Primary Components of Option 1

The Washington State Library does not provide standards for public libraries. To determine building, collection, staff and technology recommendations, we used national statistics for libraries at the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Educational Statistics, and standards established by the Wisconsin State Library and the Texas Library Association.

Building Space

There are no hard and fast rules for determining the optimum size of public library buildings. For populations above 75,000, experts quote between .5 and 1 square foot per capita. A population of 150,000



would call for building space of 75,000 to 150,000 square feet. When the square feet are spread over more than one building, additional square feet are needed because of the duplication of certain services, such as circulation and reference areas.

The current buildings are approximately 22,336 square feet in the downtown branch, and 6,592 square feet in the Highlands branch for a total of only 28,928 square feet. Adding the square feet of the existing downtown branch to a new 60,000 square foot branch (replacing or expanding Highlands) would provide for a total of 82,336 square feet. Additional space would be available in whatever is developed for the newly annexed Benson Hill area and also in Fairwood and Skyway if they annex (because both currently contain a branch of the King County Library System).

Library Collection

Collection size and quality are significant elements of library services. Renton Public Library currently has 173,248 print items or 3.13 items per capita. A collection serving 150,000 people would call for a collection of at least 469,500 items. There should also be a commensurate increase in audio visual materials and periodical subscriptions. According to the Wisconsin State Library standards, a library serving a population of 150,000 should have a collection of print, audio and video totaling 615,000 items.

Staff

The most important component of quality library service is a knowledgeable and experienced library staff committed to providing the highest possible level of customer service to their community members. In 2007, the Renton Public Library employed approximately 20.5 FTE employees. Comparing the number of Renton Public Library employees to the Texas Library Association and Wisconsin State Library standards reveals that Renton’s current staffing falls 33%-44% below Texas standards and 49%-56% below the Wisconsin standards.

	Population 50,000-99,000	Population 100,000-199,999
Current RPL Staff	20.5 FTE	—
Texas Library Association	36 to 43 FTE	43 to 50 FTE
Wisconsin State Library	47 to 55 FTE	60 to 70 FTE

Technology

The Renton Public Library system currently has 13 Internet computer stations, 1 word processing station, and 15 catalog/database computers, a total of 29 public computers. If we review the number of public Internet computers in libraries which currently have the projected population of Renton, they typically have .5 to .65 terminals per 1,000 population. Following that formula, for a Renton population of 150,000 people, 75 to 98 computers would be needed.

Another method of determining numbers of computers needed is based on size of the library building. After analyzing library statistics for the State of Washington, it was determined that current best practice in western Washington is to provide 1.9 public computers per 1,000 sq. feet. This translates into 55 public computers for Renton's current 28,928 square feet of library space. These would be allocated between the two libraries as follows:

Main Library — 40 workstations subdivided by usage:

- 29 Public Internet stations including one hour, 1/2 hour, and 15 minute express stations
- 2 Word Processing stations
- 9 catalog and database computers

Highlands Branch Library — 15 workstations subdivided by usage:

- 11 Public Internet stations including one hour, 1/2 hour, and 15 minute express stations
- 1 Word processing station
- 3 Catalog and database computers

Since there are currently 29 public computers, the above recommendation would mean adding 26 new workstations and accompanying furniture. In addition, to offset the increased volume of users, an additional printer and self-service reservation and printing stations should be included.

Phased Implementation of Option 1

Stage 1 — 2008-2010

A major perception of community members is that the "library over the bridge" is a unique and significant element of Renton. Maintaining that building as a library branch is important, although the current configuration of the space is inadequate for all of the activities currently housed there. Stage 1 is an interim, with the remodeling of existing facilities and the purchase of an outreach van. Increases in staff, collection and technology budgets are needed so that recommended programs and services can be developed by the library.

Immediate Steps to Begin Stage 1

Facilities

Hire a space planner to assist in evaluating and improving the current use of library space in both branches, and to update the look and feel of the library buildings.

Re-design the downtown library to provide additional space for the public, including: meeting and program space; quiet reading/study areas; more computers; and more comfortable seating.

Re-design the Highlands branch for more effective use of space.

Install drive up book drops at both branches.

Services

Increase staff by eight, providing for additional open hours, increased purchasing of new materials, increased children's programs, the addition of teen and adult programming, outreach services, partnership development, and marketing of library services.

Now that the Benson Hill area has annexed to Renton, the library should find ways to service that community for the short term, such as a library kiosk, a book pick-up/return site, or outreach van services.

Purchase van for library outreach services.

Increase collection size and variety to address needs of a more diverse public.

Restore evening and Friday hours at the Highlands branch and add Sunday hours at the main library.

Add more public Internet access computers to allow all citizens to have access to computer resources regardless of income, education or cultural background.

Establish a virtual branch with dedicated staff and a variety of blogs, wikis, and other opportunities for social networking.

Provide outreach to schools, teens, seniors and immigrants.

Costs for Stage 1

Total Costs for Stage 1 — A Two Year Period

Total Costs—Stage 1	Year One	Year Two	Total
Increased staff	\$460,862	\$474,688	\$935,550
Increased Collection	\$250,000	\$257,500	\$507,500
Increased Technology	\$131,486		\$131,486
Capital Improvements	\$296,000	\$586,000	\$882,000
TOTALS	\$1,138,348	\$1,318,188	\$2,456,536

Breakdown of Increased Staff Costs: \$935,550

Increased Staff Costs	Year One	Year Two	Ongoing
3 Masters Degree (MLS) Librarians @ \$73,977	\$221,931	\$228,589	3% increases per year (or as required by contract)
4 Library Assistants @ \$46,324	\$185,296	\$190,855	
1 Paraprofessional @ \$53,635	\$53,635	\$ 55,244	
TOTALS	\$460,862	\$474,688	

Breakdown of Increased Collection Costs: \$507,500

Increased Collection Costs	Year One	Year Two	Ongoing
Additional Library Collection Budget	\$250,000	\$257,500	3% increases per year
TOTALS	\$250,000	\$257,500	

Breakdown of Increased Technology Costs: \$131,486

Increased Technology Costs	Year One	Year Two	Ongoing
Additional Technology Budget			
27 new workstations with monitors and peripherals	26 X \$2086 = \$54,236		
Additional Printer	\$750		
Self-service reservation and printing station costs	\$9,000		
Network Infrastructure upgrades	\$22,500		
Furniture	\$45,000		
TOTALS	\$131,486		

Breakdown of Costs for Capital Improvements: \$882,000

Capital Improvement	Downtown Remodel	Highlands Remodel	Other	Total
Space Planning	\$80,000	\$35,000		\$115,000
Construction	\$350,000	\$150,000		\$500,000
Furnishings				
Carpeting	\$25,000	\$15,000		
Furniture	\$100,000	\$35,000		
Technology	\$25,000	\$20,000		\$45,000
Drive Up Book Drops	\$6,000	\$6,000		\$12,000
Rental Cost	-----			
Van Purchase		\$35,000	\$35,000	
TOTALS	\$586,000	\$261,000	\$35,000	\$882,000

Stage 2 — 2010- 2013**Facilities**

Construct a remodeled or new 60,000 sq. ft. facility either on the current Highlands site or in conjunction with another building such as a park district building or community center. That new building would house administrative and support services, in addition to the existing and expanded public services of a larger branch.

Explore options for adding a new branch to expand services further in the community, including in PAA areas. Now that the Benson Hill

area has voted to annex to Renton, we recommend opening a rental branch facility in that community until the Fairwood situation is resolved.

Explore options to add smaller neighborhood facilities such as homework centers, popular reading centers, and kiosks

Services

Increase staff, services, technology and collections on a pro rata basis with addition of branches and expansion of service areas

Staff Costs

A general guideline is 3 public services staff per 3,000 square foot of public area. This is in addition to staff needed for outreach services provided in the community or for technical services or administrative staff.

Technology Costs

If we use the square foot formula of 1.9 computers per 1,000 square feet mentioned above, the number of computers needed for the 60,000 square foot major branch would be an additional 114. The cost of these additional computers and the subsequent printers, network, and furniture would be about \$260,000 for initial purchase, plus ongoing maintenance, upgrade and replacement costs.

Building Costs

A number of architects and building planners state that the cost of a new library building is approximately \$250 per square foot for the building and \$350 per square foot for the new building plus the furnishings and wiring. Seattle Public Library says its new main library cost \$273 a square foot while San Francisco's library cost \$480 per square foot. In 2004, King County Library System estimated costs for new library construction at \$346 per square foot. In 2007, KCLS said estimates rose to \$450 and higher per square foot.

A 60,000 square foot building at \$300 per square foot = \$18,000,000, not including site costs, wiring, or furnishings.

Site Selection

Site selection is often based on opportunities available to a library. The library must evaluate the situation when a new location becomes available or when another government entity offers either a current space or partnership to build a new space. In siting its branch libraries, King County Library System has partnered with numerous other entities, from retail to residential.

When the library chooses a new space based solely on its needs, site evaluation is an important yet complex process. Factors include location, size, visibility, traffic, pedestrian and vehicular access,

infrastructure, environmental conditions, community growth patterns, development restrictions, and land cost and availability.

Location is the single most important factor in site evaluation.

Nationwide library usage studies report:

An estimated 70 percent of library users live within a two-mile radius of the library they use.

Few metropolitan users will drive beyond 15 minutes.

Many ethnic communities resist travel outside their immediate community.

Children, elderly and non-working individuals prefer smaller branches within walking distance.

Stage 3 — 2013 +

As the various PAAs annex to the City of Renton, the city and library must review the demographics at the time, evaluate existing library programs and services, consider the distance and convenience of existing library sites including any facilities acquired as a part of an annexation, and plan for future rental space or new buildings.

Possible Funding Strategies for Improvements in Library Services

If the City of Renton is to enhance and improve library services for its community, it will need to increase the expenditure authority of the library. We list here some possible funding strategies for increasing revenue for the improvement of library services. Public library service is such an important public good and cornerstone of any community that we strongly encourage public funding of such service. Therefore, we see general fundraising, as well as grants and partnerships, as supplemental to the base funding.

Renton City Operating Budget

The Renton City Operating Budget needs to be the major source of funding for independent municipal library services in Renton.

Benson Hill Annexation

Before annexing to the City of Renton, the Benson Hill residents voted to pay for bonds to finance new library buildings. Benson Hill residents will continue to pay on those bonds until 2015. Under the terms of an agreement between the City and the library district (see below), KCLS will give that money to Renton for the purpose of providing library service to that area. We recommend that this money be set aside to help fund a Benson Hill branch in Stage 2 of this proposed plan. This recommendation is feasible if the City of Renton funds other elements of the plan in the interim.

According to an agreement between the City of Renton and the King County Library System. Regarding The Disposition Of Library Capital Assets In The Event Of Certain Annexations, there will be a transfer of assets.

“KCLS will pay to Renton the amount equal to the sum of the annexed area's pro rata share of \$172,000,000, the total principal amount of KCLS unlimited tax general obligation bonds that were approved by voters within KCLS in 2004. KCLS will also pay to Renton the annexed areas pro rata share of the net book value of the total capital assets of KCLS, adjusted to eliminate any increases in such net book value resulting from capital improvements already financed by the 2004 bonds. KCLS and Renton intend and agree that these amounts represent the future investment in libraries that the citizens in the annexed areas have agreed to make to date.

KCLS will also sell all KCLS library buildings located within the annexed area and the real property on which they are located to Renton and Renton shall purchase such library buildings and real property from KCLS, at a purchase price equal to the fair market value thereof.”

Levy Lid Lift

Residents could be asked to vote on a Levy Lid Lift ballot measure to increase the Renton city tax revenues for the purpose of providing additional funding for library services. Library ballot measures have high records of success. National surveys and votes demonstrate that the general public likes and appreciates public libraries, and voters are willing to tax themselves for libraries, even voters who themselves rarely use their public library. Libraries are an important and valued community asset. We heard that sentiment often in Renton.

General Obligation Bonds — Voted and/or Councilmanic

General Obligation Bonds would be a public source of funds for library services, especially capital projects or collections.

Public Development Authority (PDA)

A Public Development Authority could be established by the City of Renton as a public corporation to further library projects. “A PDA may undertake any ‘public purpose’s specified in its charter. Examples of projects include developing the Seattle Art Museum, assisting in the development of the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field in King County, developing City Hall on Mercer Island ... managing the Pike Place Market in Seattle, and developing the Convention Center in Bellevue.” (quote from attorneys at Preston Gates & Ellis LLP in a presentation titled City and County Options for Creative Financing: PFDs, PDAs and 501(c)(3)s for the Washington Economic Development Association’s Spring Conference – April 15-16, 2003.) The complete document is on the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington’s website at: <http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/econ/PDA-PFDfinancing.pdf>. For more information about PDAs, see the MRSC website at www.mrsc.org.

Partnerships

Partnerships leverage the library's resources through resource sharing and other collaborative efforts. This is an important activity regardless of the funding sources for library services. But, partnerships won't replace basic public funding.

General Fund Raising

Fund Raising is a welcome and useful source of funding, especially for special projects. But this is not to be considered a replacement for public funding. Individuals, foundations and corporations can be approached.

Grants

Grants are also welcome and useful funding, especially for special projects, but should not be considered a replacement for public funding.

Option 2. Join/Annex to the King County Library System (KCLS)

What is the King County Library System?

The King County Library System (KCLS) is an independent library service provider similar to school districts, fire districts and other special purpose districts established by voters around the county and across the state. KCLS is not part of King County government. KCLS currently provides library services through both outreach services and 43 community libraries throughout King County in all cities but Seattle, Enumclaw and Renton (which all provide independent municipal library services). Some of Renton's neighboring cities that have voted to join/annex to KCLS include Auburn, Bellevue, Bothell, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kent, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Redmond, and Tukwila. KCLS is the second busiest library system in the U.S. in circulation of materials, with over 800,000 people entering its 43 libraries each month. It has a collection of over 3.6 million items, 1,200 employees and an operating budget of more than \$80 million. Its sole business is providing library services.

What is annexation?

Annexation is the legal term to describe what happens if the voters of Renton choose to join KCLS. Annexation would transfer the responsibility for providing library services from the City of Renton to the King County Library System. Annexation would allow KCLS to levy taxes for library services within the city limits of Renton. Current state law permits cities up to 100,000 population to annex to library districts like KCLS. Renton may surpass 100,000 soon, but the Legislature readily raised the limit in the past and is likely to do so again if Renton wants to join KCLS in the future.

What is the Renton Public Library's current relationship with the King County Library System?

Currently, KCLS and the Renton Public Library system (RPL) have a reciprocal borrowing agreement that allows the patrons of each library's jurisdiction to use the services of the other. A cross use study was conducted in 2006 and 2007 to determine the extent of use of RPL and KCLS resources by the non-residents of each district. The study concluded that there currently exists an imbalance in the cross-use, with the citizens of Renton making greater use of KCLS than KCLS users make of the Renton Public Library. The agreement that was reached to settle this discrepancy involves the City of Renton making annual payments to KCLS.

Based on the imbalances found in this survey, the City of Renton has agreed to pay KCLS \$72,000 in 2008. Since the Benson Hill annexation to the city, the cross-use payment may be deducted from the amount KCLS owes to Renton as reimbursement of bond proceeds mentioned above. As changes to both Renton's population and to the Renton Public Library system occur, cross-use between the two systems will need to be re-measured, and any payment amounts adjusted accordingly.

Benefits of Joining KCLS

- Based on current distribution patterns of KCLS branches (and population projections for Renton), it is certain Renton would have one KCLS branch, and possibly more branches if Fairwood and other PAAs annex to the city. Based on KCLS' prior negotiations with other municipalities, Renton could negotiate with KCLS about number of branches and locations and when services would begin.
- Based on KCLS' current patterns of service, Renton KCLS branches would receive a number of services beyond what the City of Renton now funds. Renton KCLS branches would have: meeting/program and study rooms; more open days and longer service hours; more breadth and depth of collection (e.g., more books, more magazines and newspapers; more videos); programs for teens; programs for adults; more programs for children; programs in languages other than English; more staff; more computers and computer resources; greater virtual library resources and Internet presence; more outreach in the community; up to date facilities; more shared collections and library materials among branches; more marketing resources.
- KCLS is the second busiest public library in the U.S., serving a large county population. With its only business being library services, KCLS is able to focus its ample resources on maintaining and improving library services throughout King County. KCLS has advantages of scale, funding, staff experience and shared resources. KCLS can afford to do frequent research, try innovative services, and keep facilities and services updated.

Disadvantages of Joining KCLS

- Services and facilities will follow a model developed for county wide library services rather than tailored specifically for Renton. Many Renton community members expressed fear at the possibility of losing the small town touch, personal service and friendliness they receive from their smaller, independent library system.
- Materials would be shared amongst a much larger service population and housed across a significantly larger geographical area. This translates into less immediate availability and longer wait times for popular materials than patrons currently experience at the Renton libraries.
- The locus of control for library services in Renton will be at the King County Library System.
- There might be only one library facility, at least until other PAAs annex to the city.

Costs of Joining KCLS

- Joining KCLS would shift the cost of providing library services from the general fund budget of the City of Renton to the individual property tax bills of Renton residents who would then be paying library support directly to KCLS. If the Renton City Council favored this option, the question would be put on the ballot for a majority vote of Renton taxpayers.
- If Renton tax payers voted to join KCLS, by state law their maximum library tax rate would be 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property valuation. (This is \$100 per year on a \$200,000 home and would provide KCLS services for all residents of the dwelling.) Current KCLS library tax rate is below 40 cents per \$1000 and declining because of the 1% cap on property tax levies (1% cap was voted permanent by the Legislature in late November 2007). Renton's current city budget supports library services at about 24 cents per \$1000 of the city's assessed valuation. Renton city officials would need to decide whether to reduce their collection of taxes to offset some or all of their residents' payments to KCLS.

CHAPTER 8

Recommendations

The City of Renton and the Renton Public Library Board of Trustees want the Renton Public Library to provide customer focused, high quality, cost effective, and well managed services to Renton residents. We were commissioned to conduct a study to facilitate the development of a master plan to pursue those goals and to guide the Renton Public Library into the future.

Through a highly participative process, we achieved the following:

A review and analysis of Renton's history, demographics, community values, development, and projections for the future

An analysis of current library service levels, including staffing and hours of operation

A functional analysis of both library facilities

A comparison of Renton Public Library with other Washington libraries, as well as libraries in comparable communities across the country

A needs assessment that gathered extensive community input and that represented many different perspectives via interviews, focus groups, a survey and public meetings

Identification of the gaps between the library services that the Renton Public Library currently provides and those that it could and should provide to its rapidly growing and diversifying community

Identification of important issues the library and City must resolve

Creation of a vision for the future of the library with strategic directions and goals, including a picture of the "ideal library services for the citizens of Renton"

Throughout this study, we worked closely with members of the Library Board of Trustees, City Administration, and the Library Planning/Advisory Committee. The Library Planning/Advisory Committee spent two days with us digesting all the data and input we had synthesized, and they produced a vision and new strategic directions and goals for the library to fulfill its mission to provide customer focused, excellent library services for the New Renton.

Our recommendations for achieving the vision, mission, strategic directions and goals are based on consideration of all the data we collected and all the public input and participation, as well as our decades of experience with high levels of cost effective customer service in well managed public libraries across the state and the nation.



The Library in the Old Renton

We heard from the community that the library has served them well in its role of a traditional small city library, with books, magazines, story hours for young children, friendly personalized service, and a few computers added in recent years. The library has been a valuable community asset in the Old Renton. We concur with this assessment. The Renton Public Library has succeeded admirably at providing decades of traditional small city library services for the Old Renton. But now we are in a New Renton.

The Library in the New Renton

With rapid growth and the annexation of Benson Hill, Renton's population recently jumped to over 76,562. With additional annexations, Renton's population could increase to over 125,000 in the near future. In the context of both annexations and continued in-city growth, we believe library services should be planned for a population of 150,000 in 10 years.

The New Renton Public Library must drive "Ahead of the Curve" to provide the library services needed for the New Renton. It has to respond to the growth, diversity and changing needs and priorities of the community— both now and into the future.

The library has to be more than a place to get books, story times and a few computer resources. It needs to be a dynamic place to go and be, welcoming to its residents in all their diversity of culture, language, age and ability. It needs to provide the amenities library users have repeatedly asked for, such as comfortable gathering spaces, cafes and music listening stations. It needs to be "The Information Place," a lifelong learning center for ALL of the community, and an important partner with other city departments, agencies, organizations and businesses.

To get "Ahead of the Curve," we recommend the City invest in a number of library improvements, most of which were also identified by community members:

Facilities

Both the downtown and Highlands library buildings are too small, congested, and outdated. Both have issues with traffic flow, sight-lines, and infrastructure. Both urgently need interior space planning, re-design, and re-decorating. Neither library branch has rooms for meeting, studying, programs, or expanded technology. The library needs up-to-date facilities that are warm and welcoming community centers where individuals and families may come to meet, study, learn, and read together. .

Hours

Public demands and needs require the library be open seven days per week and for longer hours. Currently there is no Sunday service at either branch, no service at all on Friday at Highlands and not enough open hours altogether.

Programs and Services

Residents expressed the most need and interest in relation to programs and services. Currently, the library only offers programs for young children. Community members requested many more programs and services. To provide the New Renton what it needs and wants from the library, a few of the requested programs and services we strongly recommend adding include:

- more activities for school-aged children
- activities for teens
- activities for adults
- inter-generational programming
- ESL materials and classes at the library
- book discussion programs and author appearances
- orientations to library services, particularly for immigrant populations
- increased outreach to schools
- increased outreach to populations that don't use the library
- increased partnerships with community organizations and businesses
- increased resources to help people develop career and business competencies

Materials

The library needs an increased variety of materials in its collection, particularly online resources with downloadable content, resources to support the schools' curricula and homeschoolers, educational video games, more foreign language materials, and more DVDs. The collections at both branches are currently constrained by the size of the facilities and insufficient expenditure authority.

Staffing

The library needs additional staff to provide needed programs and services, and, specifically, staff that reflects the diversity in the Renton community.

Technology

There are often long lines to use the computers because there are not enough computers. The library needs more computers that are kept up-to-date, as well as learning and research tools delivered via computer.

Partnerships

Communication between the business community and the library is becoming increasingly important. With the changing landscape of downtown Renton and demographic changes such as more retirees and immigrants, partnerships with community agencies need to be strengthened. Collaboration with educational institutions also needs more attention.

Marketing

There needs to be more extensive and effective marketing of library programs and services to residents. Many residents are not aware of helpful services the library currently provides.

A detailed version of the suggested improvements broken out as a phased plan with cost estimates can be found in Chapter 7.

Recommended Option:

Improve Service Levels as an Independent Municipal Library with an Expanded Expenditure Authority and a Continuing Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement with KCLS

We recommend that the City of Renton make a long-term service and financial commitment to an independent municipal library, rather than join the King County Library System.

This recommendation reflects Renton's long history of independence, local pride and control, and services tailored to the community. The City of Renton and its residents highly value flexible, modern, personalized services and expect such services from their public library. The recommended option would enable the Renton Public Library to provide the services needed and requested by the citizens of Renton. Independence will allow the City of Renton to determine the appropriate facilities and services and the location of those facilities for its increasingly diverse and expanding population. It will allow for extensive partnership development as well as building facilities with other city departments for joint use. Independence will also allow the City to continue developing library services based on its own needs and priorities rather than based on another government body's perceptions of how Renton would fit into county-wide library service needs and priorities.

To improve service levels as an independent municipal library, we recommend a multiple stage process.

Implementation Recommendations

Immediate Steps

Hire a space planner to assist in evaluating and improving the current use of library space.

Create programming space in the downtown library

Locate programming space in the Highlands area

Re-design to update the look and feel of the library buildings

Increase professional library staff, improving and expanding services

Increase library hours at both branches

Provide outreach to schools, teens, seniors, immigrants and Benson Hill residents

Stage 1 (2008-2010):

- Remodel and re-design the two existing branches
- Install drive-up book drops at both locations
- Purchase an outreach van and provide more outreach services throughout the community
- Provide a library facility option in the Benson Hill area
- Create a virtual branch with dedicated staff
- Create a wider range of computer resources
- Increase number of staff, including 3 MLS-degree librarians, 4 library assistants and 1 paraprofessional
- Increase the library's materials budget by \$250,000 in Year One and \$257,500 in Year Two
- Increase the number of computers available to the public

Costs for Stage 1

Increased Staff

Year One	\$460,862
Year Two	\$474,688

Increased Collection

Year One	\$250,000
Year Two	\$257,500
Increased Technology	\$133,572
Capital Improvements	\$882,000

TOTAL \$2,458,622

Stage 2 (2010-2013):

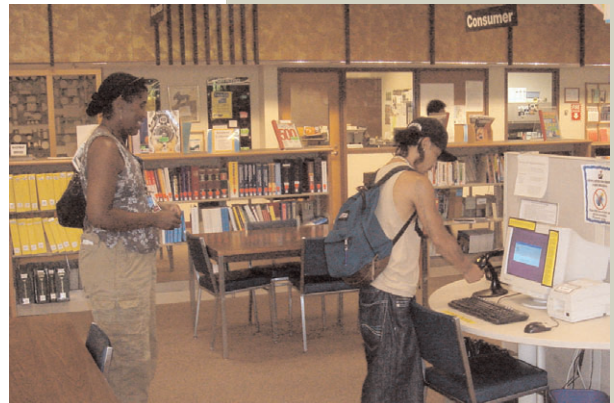
- Build (or remodel) a 60,000 square foot library branch
- Add library outlets/facilities as Potential Annexation Areas (PAAs) annex to Renton. Services for Benson Hill residents need addressing now. In Fairwood, this initiative would include assuming responsibility for the current KCLS facility and providing its library services.

Building costs for a 60,000 square foot building at \$300 per square foot are approximately \$18,000,000. The costs of additional staff and collection budget are to be determined at that time.

The Association of Washington Cities 2008 report on State of the Cities is titled: *Washington's Invisible Backbone: Infrastructure Systems in Washington's Cities and Towns*. The report's section on municipal buildings (pp. 73-74) emphasizes: "A city's municipal buildings — city hall, fire stations, police stations, public works facilities, community center, senior centers, libraries and the like — provide vital services and

help create a community identity and community pride. The condition of these buildings affects the way many services are delivered. Growth in population and in economic activity has influenced the need for increased capacity. A lack of capacity has contributed to the need for facility upgrades for police stations (79 percent), city halls (77 percent), libraries (73 percent), fire stations (68 percent), and community center/senior centers (46 percent). Municipal buildings are important pieces of a city's capital assets. But unlike many other pieces of the city infrastructure system, state and federal grant and loan programs don't exist for many municipal buildings. Yet these facilities are vital for economic development, quality of life and quality service delivery."³

The public loves libraries and sees libraries as a common good, a crucial cornerstone of democracy in every community, providing equal access and services for citizens of all ages, abilities and cultures. Libraries serve more daily users than any other public facility. In one Washington city, both the Mayor and the City Manager told us: "Our library is the heart of our community." Nationwide, Americans in community after community have enthusiastically voted new taxes to maintain and expand the high quality library programs and services they want and need. Based on what we heard from Renton community members, we believe Renton residents will join other Americans in financially supporting their community library, the library for the New Renton, the Renton that is "Ahead of the Curve."



3. Association of Washington Cities, 2008 State of the Cities. Washington's Invisible Backbone: Infrastructure Systems in Washington's Cities and Towns, pages 73-74.

RENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY MASTER PLAN STUDY 2008-2013

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1

Renton Public Library Focus Group/Public Meeting Summary page i

Attachment 2

Comparative Benchmark Analyses
Identifying Gaps in Renton's Resources and Services page iv

Attachment 3

Renton Public Library Summary of Online Survey page xxv

RENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY FOCUS GROUP/PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

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Strengths	i
Comments about Raising Families In Renton	i
Concerns/Issues	ii
Where Do They Get Reading Materials And Information?	ii
What They Would Like To See At the Library —What the Library Can Do	ii
Promoting Programs and Services	v

Major Changes

Diversity

The group agreed that the most dramatic change has been the community's diversity.

Immigrants are moving to Renton, where housing is more affordable. Finding multilingual employees is one of the biggest challenges. Renton Technical College cannot meet the demand for ESL classes.

There are 79 languages spoken in Renton schools. Sixty percent of kids in schools now are not native English speakers. The school district student enrollment crested where minorities are now the majority. Forty-seven percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. In addition, there are 225 homeless kids in the district. As the need for free and reduced lunches goes up, so does the need for social services. Twenty-five percent of students in the district qualify for special needs or non-English language skills.

Growth and development

The downtown is being revitalized.

The Landing Development and new housing in general are increasing. With the downtown redevelopment, seniors are moving in. Families, however, live in the Highlands area.

With new development, there is growth, traffic, increased population, expanded residential units in downtown, and modernization of downtown. There is a different atmosphere from the past, when Renton was a sleepy little town. Now there is more pride in community.

Property values have increased tremendously, but housing is not as affordable as it has been. Boeing has downsized and more people live in Renton, but work in other locations. There are an increasing number of national chains moving into Renton.

Renton is no longer predominantly blue-collar.

There is now a much higher component of professional people, and the blue-collar workers that are here are well paid.

A strong local economy

Boeing is doing well, although Renton is no longer dependent on the company.

There is more pride about living in Renton.

It is cleaner, nicer, and more desirable. In the past, many were reluctant to say they live in Renton, but that is changing.

Strengths

Renton has an incredible foundation of partnerships and leveraging. If institutions can take a more comprehensive look at how the community models connect, it would help take the library further. There are pieces in place now, and the library is the information source.

Comments about Raising Families in Renton

Renton is a great place to raise kids; it is a small town with big city amenities. It has nature and excellent small parks. The diversity of the population is a big plus, and people are very friendly. New developments are very affordable and attract young families. "There is so much in this community; you don't need to go anywhere."

The elementary schools are terrific, particularly the magnet schools. However, the middle school is just "OK", and the high school district is not good and needs to improve. It used to be highly rated, but its quality is dropping. The group suggested that constant construction and portables have gotten in the way. In the high schools, there is a feeling of a community lost. School spirit is lacking, and WASL scores are low. People do not move to Renton for its schools. The group fears that the schools will not be good enough for their kids and are looking at private schools.

Concerns/Issues

Moms

Safety
Social pressures
Quality of schools

Immigrants

Language barrier
Intimidation
Conversion of education and skills
Lack of awareness of or willingness to use available services
Youth interpretation of American values
Housing
How Immigrants receive information

Teens

There is not much for teens to do in Renton. In the summer, it is getting harder to find jobs, especially since so much business is being done on the Internet.

Safety in school and out in the community.

Pressure to pass the WASL.

Peer pressure to drink, take drugs, and participate in sexual activities.

Seniors

Finding a place to go when you cannot live by yourself, but you are still of good mind and body.

Transportation is an issue.

Seniors feel like they have no place to go when their spouse is gone, and they need to find a new way to become involved.

Business

Finding multilingual employees.

Renton Technical College

More demand for ESL classes than it can meet.
The College needs one central place where it can reach out.

Where Do They Get Reading Materials And Information?

Internet
Library for local information
Magazines not on the Internet
KC Journal, the Reporter, Reader's Digest, and Seattle newspapers
Used bookstores
The library
Professional journals
ProQuest and WA Administrative Code (recent college graduate)

What They Would Like To See at the Library

General Comments

The library has to be more than a place to get books. It needs to be a place to go and a place to be. It needs to be more like Barnes & Noble with a coffee shop. The teens like Borders with its listening stations.

Many did not know they can use RPL and that Renton and KCLS patrons can get cards at both libraries. Several asked why Renton is not part of KCLS; many people who work in Renton but live elsewhere do not know that they can use the library and that there is reciprocity with KCLS.

Do not build a library like downtown Seattle. Renton needs something to work with and not for show. The public library should be a place to study, not an art place with distractions.

Establish an outreach program. People do not know about all of the resources available to them. It would be helpful to have a poster from the library about where to get information in many languages. Let people know what the library can do for them. Most of business community needs to know they can send employees to library.

Install an electronic kiosk with a touch screen in 15 languages

Facilities

Both branches of the library look dated; there needs to be a brighter environment.

Build smaller libraries and more of them, reaching out to all residents.

Patrons would like to see:

Diaper-changing station

Drive-up window

A “café type place” where someone can actually relax, like at Starbucks, and install laptop plug-ins

Meeting rooms

Study rooms

Rooms for classes

Community room at the library where people can come to programs, a place that is dry and safe, with coffee

Parents like the main branch’s children’s area: “You can contain your children, relatively speaking. It’s a nice space for them to be.” Others feel that the children’s corner should be more closed off because their activity makes it too noisy to study. They suggested putting kids on a different floor and establishing a “study wing.”

A new building is needed in the Highlands, and a citizen mentioned a third library in Renton, perhaps in the Hazen or Liberty Area. The corner of 10th and Sunset and the Sartori education center were both mentioned as good locations for new library branches. “People want to be able to walk to the library.”

Concern was expressed that any new library not be “wacko,” but a building that reflects the community and its history. In designing a new library, pay attention to the architecture — “we want it to look good.”

The landscaping at the Highlands branch needs changing — it looks like a weed patch.

There is not enough room in the current buildings. The South King County Genealogy Society would like access to a computer lab where they can conduct classes; they received a request from Green River Comm. College to teach genealogy research.

Those that live downtown enjoy walking to the library, but the current library is too small. “Make the library a place for the community to come together for various purposes.”

A suggestion was made to replace the old city hall with a new library, or perhaps remodel the old city hall into a library.

KCLS has a small satellite library at the South Center Mall. With the development of the Landing, a library could be built in that area.

The city could pass an ordinance that says the Landing must have a library.

Technology

Both branches need more computers in both the adult and youth services areas.

Students need more computers available for class work.

Offer WiFi access to the Internet.

Hours

There is a need for seven-day service and more hours at both branches, especially on Fridays and weekends in the Highlands.

Security

Additional security is needed at the downtown branch; install security cameras in the parking lot. There is fear of transients.

Programming

More activities for school-aged children.

Story times scheduled for the convenience of patrons — more presented and at different times. Consider themed series and in different languages. Hold separate story times for pre-school groups.

Age-appropriate activities.

Career programs that overcome gender bias, e.g., women fire fighters.

Programs and activities for patrons over 16.

Programs like the youth group RASE, a place where they can talk about their feelings.

Inter-generational programming.

Get big names like Nintendo to sponsor library activities.

KCLS offers teen programs and has a teen advisory board.

A young writer's series like KCLS.

ESL materials and classes at the library.

Discussion or research groups.

Hold a singles book club.

Read a chapter a week and come to discuss.

Hold a book club with the author in attendance.

Offer activities for women in general.

Orientation to library services and procedures for all residents and special orientations for immigrant populations.

Parenting classes, such as early literacy.

Develop a parenting resources section that includes, for example, information on finding good childcare.

Fairwood had a binder with forms that evaluate pre-school or art classes in the area.

Many of the moms need to find free activities for their kids. At the Community Center, you have to pay for programs.

Hold a monthly discussion on topics that affect women in the community, such as parenting, post-partum depression, and dealing with special needs kids.

Parents have no idea of what their kids are entitled to.

Have a community interest board. The library is where people come together.

Increase outreach to schools. The schools used to bring kids to RPL for tours, but budget cuts ended this activity. The school district population is increasing, and especially in summers, there needs to be an easier way for children to have access to library services. A bookmobile was suggested.

The business community believes that the core mission of the library is to help people develop competencies to work in a business environment.

Materials

Participants suggested that the public library coordinate its collection with the school collections. The collection should offer additional books in foreign languages, as there are many recent immigrants. The children will learn English, but parents may not do so.

Students think the library should pay more attention to the outside reading books assigned by the school, and requested that the library obtain the reading list from each high school and have those books available.

Video games, Dance Dance Revolution, and other games.

Have a way to speed up delivery between the main and annexed libraries.

Some immigrants go to KCLS for foreign language materials; RPL does not have the resources of KCLS.

The public would like to see more audio materials for learning English and books in other languages.

They would like to see more DVDs.

Staffing

RPL needs more staff in general and specifically staff that speak other languages. If people visit the library, can anyone speak to them in their language? How can we make everyone feel welcome?

The library also needs to be more student-friendly.

Partnerships

Communication between the business community and the library is important. This is particularly true with the changing landscape of downtown Renton, retirees moving in, and safety issues.

RTC is an interesting bridge between schools and the public library. Almost 30 percent of the College's students are taking a course with ESL and ABE. They could use community programs that help people learn English— a high-touch program. Have the type of information that people do not have but will not say they need.

The College is willing to pilot an orientation about how to be a college student and services needed in terms of income, transportation, and tutoring issues. They are also interested in looking at tutoring partnerships.

Miscellaneous

The group suggested improving and expanding the volunteer program, which should help increase the number of programs offered.

Independence for RPL vs. Joining KCLS

There were strong opinions expressed by those who want the RPL to remain a part of the City of Renton and those who would like to see Renton join the King County Library System. RPL supporters like the personalized and friendly service the library offers. Families with home-schooled children in particular like the library's special services. A participant mentioned that RPL's real strength is local history, which KCLS does not collect. KCLS supporters like the resources, materials, and programming available there. A few asked that the city look at comparative hours, staffing, collections, computers, programs, and costs.

Some questioned the seriousness of the City of Renton in regard to financially supporting changes to the library, and stated that the City needs to increase the budget for more staff and materials.

Promoting Programs and Services

To promote the library to the community, the group suggested including promotional materials with utility bills.

The Renton website could have more information.

Moms

Look in the Renton Reporter and at the Community Center for a list of children's activities.

To reach RTC students, RTC teachers can bring ESL and ABE classes to the library.

Have an RPL staff member talk to RTC classes and sign students up for library cards.

Immigrants

Ensure that they understand that the library has more than books. Many do not have Internet access and would love to use the library's resources. Let them know that the library has newspapers in foreign languages.

Teens

How should the library gain teens' attention? The unanimous response to this question was MySpace. They suggested posting bulletins on MySpace, specifying that the message go just to teens of certain ages in Renton.

Teens find about things through friends, the high school newspaper, flyers, or announcements over the school loudspeaker.

Seniors

The library should reach out to people who find it difficult to get to the branch. "We are at a time in our lives when we do not want to collect anything, including books. We need to get our books and other materials at the library."

MASTER PLAN COMPARATIVE BENCHMARK ANALYSES

Identifying gaps in Renton's Resources and Services

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Comparative Benchmark Analysis

This section of the report begins by discussing the library context in which the Renton Public Library operates. Then we present an overview of the Renton Public Library. Next we discuss libraries in Washington State and Renton's library neighbor, the King County Library System (KCLS). The second part of this section explains benchmarking, then compares Renton's current library statistics with those of previous years. Renton is then compared to a group of libraries in Washington State with similar populations. Finally, several other national comparisons with Renton are provided.

Libraries in the State of Washington

In January of 2007, the Washington State Library released the Report, *The Landscape of Change — An Examination of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities of Washington Libraries*. Some of the points in that document that should be emphasized are as follows:

The environment within which all libraries operate has become more competitive — with tight budget constraints for public services and local government funding stretched among both necessary new services as well as maintaining infrastructure, and with many other sources for learning and information, including the Internet, multipurpose bookstores, community classes, and video stores. Libraries can no longer count on stakeholders viewing them as uniquely valuable or high priority for funding.

Interview subjects saw marketing as a major weakness of libraries.

The public sees Internet search engines as the major competition for libraries, and 65% said they wanted the library of the future to have a website with quick and easy access to reliable digital information.

Library leaders said it was vital that libraries be relevant to their communities.

Members of the public who completed the online survey, most of whom were heavy library users, were satisfied with their libraries.

These concepts are important in the development of any public library plan, but it does not look like there will be financial assistance from the State Library in addressing the issues. The Washington State Library's budget has been steadily decreasing. In 2006, not including Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding, the budget was near \$6 million, about 65% of the library's budget in 2001. Only two state libraries in the U.S. spend less per capita than Washington does.

The report states that public library directors are "positioning themselves to become key players in the early childhood arena, in response to Governor Gregoire's establishment of a Department of Early Learning." Directors are working on issues of state funding for a virtual library and a statewide library card.

This Washington State Library study provides some information useful in the development of the Renton Public Library Master Plan.

The Renton Public Library

Mission Statement

Renton Public Library supports lifelong learning for the public by anticipating and responding to community needs for information, and by inspiring and encouraging the community's desire to read.

The Miner's Association in 1903 organized Renton's first library. Then in 1914, the city obtained a \$10,000 grant from Andrew Carnegie to build a new library in the coal-mining town of less than 4,000. The city made a special appropriation of \$275, and other private companies and individuals gave \$790.

The current library was opened in 1966. This dramatic and unusual building bridges an 80-foot span across the Cedar River. Regulars and visitors, alike, are fascinated to watch the river flow beneath the library. When dedicated, the building was a local hit and a regional triumph, reviving interest in

Renton's history. The library organized a display of photographs and memorabilia that inspired the creation of the Renton Historical Society. In 1973, the Highlands Branch was opened with a capacity of 24,000 volumes and seating for 75 persons.

In 1914, the library had one employee and a collection of secondhand books. In 2007, the library employs 24 and has a collection of over 175,000 items. Core services include:

Convenient access to information and library materials, with assistance by expert library staff.

A managed collection of materials in a variety of formats to meet the informational needs and interests of the community.

Programs which introduce children to the library, books and reading.

Information and reader advisory services to adults and children.

The city continues to operate the library independently of the large regional library system (King County Library System) that surrounds it because it believes that a locally owned and operated service is more connected to the community and therefore more responsive to the unique needs of its citizens. The library's collection covers a broad range of subjects and formats. The city has built its main library and branch library in two convenient locations to serve its citizens.

In 2006, the library realized many accomplishments. A new Library Director was hired and staff installed and implemented Horizon, an up-graded, integrated library, automation system. The library increased its collection and circulated 482,840 items. Over 15,000 participated in special activities and programs with over 10,000 children attending storytimes. In 2007, the library entered in a process to create a Master Plan Study to ascertain the community's needs and desires for future library services. Current services and facilities were evaluated and recommendations for the future were developed. The library will also plan and implement a campaign to inform the community about library services.

Renton's Library Neighbor, King County Library System

Renton Public Library has one public library neighbor, the King County Library System, which surrounds the city of Renton. The King County Library System (KCLS) serves most of the residents of King County. It is one of the largest circulating libraries in the United States with 43 library branches, a Traveling Library Center, a mobile TechLab, and the ABC Express children's library van. KCLS circulates over 17 million items annually and serves more than 1 million cardholders. KCLS offers a collection of more than 4.1 million items including books, periodicals, newspapers, audio and videotapes, films, CDs, DVDs and extensive online resources. All KCLS library branches offer free Wi-Fi Internet access.

The KCLS library system began in 1942 when voters in King County established the King County Rural Library District in order to provide library services to people in rural areas with no easy access to city libraries. Funding for the library system was provided from the property tax base of unincorporated areas, and from contracts with cities and towns for the provision of library services. Funding measures for the system passed in 1966, 1977, 1980, 1988, 2002 and 2004. Property taxes account for 94% of revenue today. The KCLS revenue budget for 2005 was \$77 million or about \$108 for each King County household.

The relationships between the Renton Public Library and the King County Library System are important parts of the planning for both libraries. The City of Renton is studying the ramifications of potential annexations of KCLS-covered areas that might vote to annex to Renton.

A KCLS/RPL Cross-Use Study was conducted in 2006, and the results were made available in February, 2007. Reciprocal Loans, or materials lent directly to cardholders from other libraries, were considered. This study examined both KCLS's and RPL's cost of circulating materials on a reciprocal basis.

The study examined the change in cross-use rates between 1996 and 2006, revealing an increase of 3.7 times for KCLS use and an increase of 2.5 times for Renton use.

The KCLS cross-use rate grew from 0.37 to 1.36, or a growth of 3.7 times. The RPL cross-use rate went from 13.21 % to 32.47% or an increase of 2.5 times. The report emphasizes this statistic.

A second cross use study was done in spring 2007. Results showed again that KCLS loaned more items to Renton residents than Renton PL loaned to KCLS residents. That means KCLS is a net lender and has begun to charge RPL for the service imbalance, just as KCLS charges Seattle

Public Library for the imbalance in lending between KCLS and the Seattle Public Library.

Most of the municipalities in King County have voted to join KCLS for public library service.

	KCLS	RPL
Population	1,185,570	58,360
Budget	\$81,200,000.	\$1,800,000
Card Holders	1,085,073	40,000
Expenditure Per Card Holder	\$74.83	\$45.00
Card Holder/Population	91.52%	68.54%
Budget for Materials and Staff for Purchasing and Circulation	\$28,236,114	\$1,073,778
%Budget for Materials and Staff for Purchasing and Circulation	34.77%	59.65%
Per capita — Materials and Staff for Purchasing and Circulation	\$23.82	\$18.40
Annual circ	15,800,000	500,000
Circ Per Capita Cost	\$13.33	\$8.57
Circ per Card Holder	14.56	12.20
Circulation — Renton Patrons at KCLS	214,880 Items	
Circulation — KCLS Patrons at Renton		162,350 Items

Besides Seattle and Renton, the only other remaining independent municipal library in King County is in Enumclaw, a small community located farther from the population centers of King County. The city of Auburn was the last King County municipality with an independent public library to vote to join the King County Library System. The city of Mercer Island debated whether to withdraw from KCLS and establish its own independent municipal library but decided the cost benefits were greater to remain with KCLS. The discussion continues regarding the relationship between KCLS and the Renton Public Library. If some of the Potential Annexation Areas of King County with KCLS branches annex to Renton (Fairwood and Skyway), there will be significant issues to resolve about facilities and services, not to mention funding. The City of Renton will need to evaluate the best means to provide the best library services for its residents.

Comparisons of Renton Public Library with Other Libraries via Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a standard by which something can be measured or judged. Originally, a benchmark was a surveyor's mark made on a stationary object of previously determined position and elevation and used as a reference point in tidal observations and surveys. We are using the term to measure the Renton Public Library according to specified statistics in order to compare it with other public libraries in the U.S. and the region. The statistics chosen are the most common readily measurable statistics to indicate library service levels (inputs and outputs). These statistics generally correlate with service levels and library use in communities and have been used over time to compare public libraries with one another. Statistics can mean different things in different settings, so these numbers need to be used only as indicators.

A comparison of the Renton Public Library's service levels to local, state, and national public library statistics assists in developing target goals in areas chosen by the library.

Federal and state databases of public library statistics were used to draw multiple peer group samples, and those samples were used to compare the library with similar types of library operations.

The statistics used in this report are from three main sources:

- U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Educational Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics. (<http://nces.ed.gov/>)
- Washington Public Library Statistics 2005
<http://www.secstate.wa.gov/library/libraries/libDev/downloads/statistics/05stats/pdf/stats05.pdf>
- Renton Public Library

While registration and circulation have been flat between 2002 and 2006, not surprisingly, there has been an increase of over 300% in Internet use. Most impressive is the fact that, while the number of programs remained relatively constant, there was a 50% increase in program attendance.

Renton Public Library

Library Use Statistics	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Registration	5629	6031	6,115	5,419	5,859
Circulation	456,928	499,721	512,059	491,470	464,105
Items Added	13,767	11,547	13,0082	12,845	12,834
Internet Use	10,728	30,326	39,946	40,022	41,331
Programs	149	140	133	NA	149
Attendance	10,420	10,248	14,124	15,250	15,109

A Comparison of Renton with Seven Other Washington Libraries

For a sample of libraries in Washington, we chose libraries with similar populations and added those that Renton has used to compare itself with in the past. While the Renton Public Library population in 2004 was 55,360, the average for the comparison group was 55,661. In 2005, Renton was one of the top cities in terms of population growth in Washington at 2.67%.

Library Name	Population of Legal Service Area
Comparison Group Average	55,661
State Average (WA)	91,580
National Average	31,143
RENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, WA	55,360
MOUNT VERNON CITY LIBRARY, WA	27,720
PUYALLUP PUBLIC LIBRARY, WA	35,690
RICHLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY, WA	42,660
LONGVIEW PUBLIC LIBRARY, WA	49,740
NORTH OLYMPIC LIBRARY SYSTEM, WA	65,900
BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY, WA	71,080
EVERETT PUBLIC LIBRARY, WA	96,840

Operating Revenue

Library Name	Local Revenue	State Revenue per Capita	Total Revenue	Local Revenue per Capital	Federal Revenue	Total Revenue per Capita	State Revenue
Comparison Group Average	\$2,150,492	\$0.00	\$2,230,272	\$38.16	\$2,294	\$39.36	\$0
State Average (WA)	\$3,924,287	\$0.04	\$4,112,339	\$34.91	\$12,091	\$36.92	\$23,958
National Average	\$815,539	\$2.99	\$1,012,900	\$25.65	\$5,194	\$33.40	\$100,758
Renton Public Library, WA	\$1,493,800	\$0.00	\$1,532,200	\$26.98	\$0	\$27.68	\$0
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	\$949,935	\$0.00	\$949,935	\$34.27	\$0	\$34.27	\$0
Richland Public Library, WA	\$1,418,656	\$0.00	\$1,492,426	\$33.25	\$3,748	\$34.98	\$0
Puyallup Public Library, WA	\$1,513,278	\$0.00	\$1,522,278	\$42.40	\$0	\$42.65	\$0
Longview Public Library, WA	\$1,966,000	\$0.00	\$1,966,000	\$39.53	\$0	\$39.53	\$0
North Olympic Library System, WA	\$2,472,501	\$0.00	\$2,631,751	\$37.52	\$3,850	\$39.94	\$0
Bellingham Public Library, WA	\$2,833,666	\$0.00	\$3,033,112	\$39.87	\$0	\$42.67	\$0
Everett Public Library, WA	\$3,899,405	\$0.00	\$4,016,405	\$40.27	\$8,461	\$41.47	\$0

The most important statistic in this category is Total Revenue per Capita. While the average for the comparison group is \$39.36 and the State average is \$36.92, Renton's per capita is \$27.68, the lowest amount for the entire comparison group. Revenue per capita is often an important indicator of how well the library is supported and how much service the library can provide. It tells us how much money the library has to spend for services for each resident, rather than the aggregate library revenue. It can be very instructive to compare how different libraries spend the same numbers of dollars per capita and to see what additional services a library can provide when it has more money per capita.

Total Expenditures

Library Name	Total Operating Expenditures	Total Operating Expenditures per Capita
Comparison Group Average	\$2,183,289	\$38.61
State Average (WA)	\$3,899,870	\$34.42
National Average	\$947,640	\$31.33
Renton Public Library, WA	\$1,444,290	\$26.09
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	\$947,435	\$34.18
Richland Public Library, WA	\$1,527,460	\$35.81
Everett Public Library, WA	\$3,952,442	\$40.81
North Olympic Library System, WA	\$2,578,459	\$39.13
Longview Public Library, WA	\$1,809,263	\$36.37
Puyallup Public Library, WA	\$1,513,278	\$42.40
Bellingham Public Library, WA	\$2,954,687	\$41.57

When we examine total operating expenditures per capita, the average for State of Washington is \$34.42 and the average for the comparison group is \$38.61. Renton spends \$26.09 per capita, the lowest for its comparison group. Again, we compare expenditures per capita to determine what each library is actually spending per resident.

Expenditures for Staff

Library Name	Salaries & Wages Expenditures	Employee Benefits Expenditures	Total Staff Expenditures	Total Staff as Percent of Total Expenditures
Comparison Group Average	\$1,191,637	\$339,403	\$1,531,040	69.1%
State Average (WA)	\$2,770,859	\$730,866	\$3,501,725	65.4%
National Average	\$789,861	\$213,661	\$998,380	64.8%
Renton Public Library, WA	\$904,035	\$204,467	\$1,108,502	76.8%
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	\$599,294	\$143,821	\$743,115	78.4%
Puyallup Public Library, WA	\$659,767	\$176,414	\$836,181	55.3%
Richland Public Library, WA	\$807,819	\$268,331	\$1,076,150	70.5%
Longview Public Library, WA	\$920,762	\$251,801	\$1,172,563	64.8%
North Olympic Library System, WA	\$1,355,674	\$391,710	\$1,747,384	67.8%
Bellingham Public Library, WA	\$1,555,868	\$432,432	\$1,988,300	67.3%
Everett Public Library, WA	\$2,442,272	\$711,314	\$3,153,586	79.8%

Renton spends a large percentage of its budget on staff salaries, wages and benefits. While the state average is 65.4% and the comparison group average is 69.1%, Renton spends 76.8% of its budget on staff. An examination of the chart below reveals that staffing levels are in the appropriate range, but because of lower revenues, Renton must spend more of its budget on that staff.

Staffing Levels

The Renton library compares well to other libraries in the comparison group in terms of staffing levels and percent of master's degree level staff with degrees from American Library Association accredited programs (ALA-MLS) staff at 25%. The MLS staff per 1,000 population is near the average at .11.

	Total Staff	ALA-MLS Librarians	Total Librarians 1,000 Population	ALA-MLS Librarians per Percent of Total Staff	ALA-MLS Librarians as	Librarians without ALA-MLS	Other Staff
Comparison Group Average	32	7	10	0.12	21.8%	3	22
State Average (WA)	50	12	12	0.10	15.9%	1	37
National Average	15	3	5	0.08	12.4%	2	10
Renton Public Library, WA	24	6	6	0.11	25.0%	0	18
Puyallup Public Library, WA	19	6	6	0.16	31.3%	0	13
Richland Public Library, WA	19	5	6	0.12	26.8%	1	13
Mount Vernon Public Library, WA	20	2	9	0.07	10.0%	7	11
Longview Public Library, WA	26	5	6	0.10	19.2%	1	20
Bellingham Public Library, WA	43	10	10	0.14	23.3%	0	33
North Olympic Library System, WA	44	6	15	0.08	12.6%	9	29
Everett Public Library, WA	54	16	19	0.17	29.4%	3	35

Library Collections — Print

Renton's print collection is a bit below average in terms of total print materials and print items per capita. There could be a number of factors that account for these results, including more aggressive weeding or less money for materials because of the high percentage of the library's budget spent on staffing. Despite demand for more audio and visual media, the demand for print materials (especially current materials) continues high among library users. Renton does have a low number of subscriptions per capita, and this number needs to be examined in light of electronic subscriptions.

Library Name	Print Materials	Print Materials per Capita	Current Print Serial Subscriptions	Current Print Serial Subscriptions per 1,000 Population
Comparison Group Average	191,721	3.41	515	8.78
State Average (WA)	266,214	5.98	677	9.96
National Average	88,964	6.50	202	15.07
Renton Public Library, WA	173,248	3.13	438	7.91
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	69,128	2.49	293	10.57
Puyallup Public Library, WA	125,649	3.52	N/A	N/A
Richland Public Library, WA	144,239	3.38	359	8.42
Longview Public Library, WA	199,828	4.02	280	5.63
North Olympic Library System, WA	236,565	3.59	790	11.99
Bellingham Public Library, WA	266,344	3.75	520	7.32
Everett Public Library, WA	300,292	3.10	849	8.77

Library Collections — Audio Visual

The Renton Public Library has fewer than average video and audio materials per 1,000 population, lower than the comparison group, state average, and national average. Audio-visual materials are generally the most circulated materials in public libraries because of great and increasing public demand.

Library Name	Video Materials	Video Materials per 1,000 Population	Audio Materials	Audio Materials per 1,000 Population
Comparison Group Average	11,359	216.57	11,288	208.62
State Average (WA)	14,146	276.40	15,716	188.69
National Average	3,910	285.19	4,255	196.57
Renton Public Library, WA	10,792	194.94	4,423	79.90
Longview Public Library, WA	6,374	128.15	6,538	131.44
Bellingham Public Library, WA	12,662	178.14	18,666	262.61
Puyallup Public Library, WA	16,691	467.67	13,112	367.39
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	4,586	165.44	4,135	149.17
Richland Public Library, WA	7,733	181.27	6,163	144.47
Everett Public Library, WA	16,954	175.07	11,565	119.42
North Olympic Library System, WA	14,515	220.26	18,839	285.87

Library Collections - Electronic Materials

In 2004, statistics for electronic materials were sketchy as demonstrated in the table below. The significant statistic is the number of databases that the Renton Public Library held at that time, which is 4 as opposed to an average of 21 for the comparison group and 22 for a national average. The availability of electronic subscriptions is not well known among library users and the use of them is difficult to measure. At the same time, these are very useful resources and can be powerful marketing tools for multiple segments of the community.

Library Name	Current Electronic Serial Subscriptions	Current Electronic Serial Subscriptions per 1,000 Population	Electronic Books	Databases
Comparison Group Average	1	0.01	570	21
State Average (WA)	1	0.04	520	12
National Average	6	0.49	861	22
Renton Public Library, WA	1	0.02	0	4
Longview Public Library, WA	N/A	N/A	0	19
Puyallup Public Library, WA	N/A	N/A	0	21
Bellingham Public Library, WA	N/A	N/A	0	25
Richland Public Library, WA	0	0.00	0	15
Everett Public Library, WA	0	0.00	0	27
Mount Vernon City Library, WAA	0	0.00	0	29
North Olympic Library System, WA	3	0.05	3,987	14

Library Services- Public Service Hours

The Renton Public Library is above average nationally, statewide and within its comparison group for the average number of weekly public service hours per outlet.

Library Name	Average Number of Weekly Public Service Hours Per Outlet
Comparison Group Average	51
State Average (WA)	36
National Average	39
Renton Public Library, WA	54
North Olympic Library System, WA	39
Everett Public Library, WA	46
Bellingham Public Library, WA	46
Puyallup Public Library, WA	50
Longview Public Library, WA	52
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	56
Richland Public Library, WA	66

Library Services — Visits

The Renton Public Library did not keep track of this statistic. This statistic is an important indicator of how much the library is used and is very helpful in judging staffing requirements. The Renton Public Library has now installed a counter to track library visits.

Library Name	Library Visits	Library Visits per Capita
Comparison Group Average	399,752	7.25
State Average (WA)	510,315	6.18
National Average	147,584	5.77
Renton Public Library, WA	N/A	N/A
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	187,611	6.77
Longview Public Library, WA	276,494	5.56
Puyallup Public Library, WA	293,725	8.23
Richland Public Library, WA	325,248	7.62
North Olympic Library System, WA	466,447	7.08
Everett Public Library, WA	549,498	5.67
Bellingham Public Library, WA	699,240	9.84

Library Services — Reference

The Renton Public Library did not keep track of this statistic which measures the demand for help from experienced staff and the need for certain types of resources.

Library Name	Reference Transactions per Capita	Reference Transactions
Comparison Group Average	0.73	50,421
State Average (WA)	0.61	117,902
National Average	0.90	34,523
Renton Public Library, WA	N/A	N/A
Richland Public Library, WA	N/A	N/A
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	N/A	N/A
Puyallup Public Library, WA	N/A	N/A
North Olympic Library System, WA	0.31	20,616
Everett Public Library, WA	0.70	68,182
Bellingham Public Library, WA	0.88	62,803
Longview Public Library, WA	1.01	50,083

Library Services — Programs

Although the Renton Public Library presents many fewer programs than other libraries, the number of attendees is way above average for the group of libraries. Renton attendance may be way above average because of excellent programs and/or because of the limited number of children's programs offered at Renton. Comparison libraries all show programs and attendance for other audiences as well as children. Quality and mix of programs are important and need to be specific to the individual community.

Library Name	Total Library Programs	Total Program Attendance	Children's Program Attendance
Comparison Group Average	415	12,706	11,483
State Average (WA)	732	22,273	18,717
National Average	334	7,984	6,068
Renton Public Library, WA	133	14,124	14,124
North Olympic Library System, WA	278	8,757	6,325
Bellingham Public Library, WA	299	11,094	10,769
Longview Public Library, WA	341	11,878	10,727
Richland Public Library, WA	349	11,655	10,785
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	354	8,407	8,289
Puyallup Public Library, WA	369	6,501	5,441
Everett Public Library, WA	913	30,650	28,047

Library Services — Interlibrary Loan

The Renton Public Library has a very high net loan rate. The number of loans requested for RPL patrons is low, while the number RPL provides for other libraries is very high. Therefore, the library has a net loan rate of 8.23, much higher than any other library average in the chart. Why is Renton so much higher? Does it have to do with good turnaround on interlibrary loan requests, or is it somehow related to being surrounded by the King County Library System? Are the loans going into King County or elsewhere in the state or nation? Examination of some of the interlibrary loan requests might reveal some explanations.

Library Name	Interlibrary Loans Received	Interlibrary Loans Received per 1,000 Population	Interlibrary Loans Provided	Net Loan Rate*
Comparison Group Average	803	14.25	1,007	1.18
State Average (WA)	2,628	110.23	2,428	0.76
National Average	3,386	262.76	3,361	1.14
Renton Public Library, WA	347	6.27	2,855	8.23
Longview Public Library, WA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	319	11.51	0	0.00
Puyallup Public Library, WA	419	11.74	270	0.64
North Olympic Library System, WA	469	7.12	1,176	2.51
Richland Public Library, WA	900	21.10	1,592	1.77
Everett Public Library, WA	1,108	11.44	968	0.87
Bellingham Public Library, WA	1,605	22.58	2,035	1.27

*Net loan rate is found by dividing the number of interlibrary loans provided to other libraries by the number of interlibrary loans received from other libraries.

Library Services — Circulation

The Renton Public Library total circulation, while on par with the state average, is much lower than the comparison group average. This is particularly true in the circulation of children's materials as a percentage of total circulation at 26.4%. Since the library listed all programming as children's programming, the attendance at these programs should reasonably raise the circulation of children's materials. Further research could help explain this data.

Library Name	Total Circulation	Total Circulation per Capita	Circulation of Children's Materials	Circulation of Children's Materials As Percent of Total Circulation
Comparison Group Average	681,895	12.42	242,431	32.1%
State Average (WA)	986,631	9.44	288,292	33.9%
National Average	223,858	8.30	78,307	36.5%
Renton Public Library, WA	511,712	9.24	134,846	26.4%
Mount Vernon City Library, WA	358,287	12.93	142,608	39.8%
Longview Public Library, WA	421,248	8.47	N/A	N/A
Puyallup Public Library, WA	497,543	13.94	146,412	29.4%
Richland Public Library, WA	565,519	13.26	N/A	N/A
North Olympic Library System, WA	765,534	11.62	141,918	18.5%
Everett Public Library, WA	1,004,380	10.37	419,489	41.8%
Bellingham Public Library, WAA	1,160,753	16.33	361,727	31.2%

Comparison to Larger Libraries in Washington

Considering that the Renton area is on the verge of a huge economic and population explosion, it is instructive to look at the revenue and expenditures per capita for library systems somewhat larger than Renton. Seattle and Tacoma derive their revenue from the general city budgets just as does Renton. Pierce County, Timberland, and KCLS all are independent taxing districts and get their revenue almost entirely from property taxes. Although Renton serves a smaller population than these other libraries, the revenue comparison **per capita** can be instructive. Larger libraries often have some economies of scale.

Library Name	Total Revenue per Capita	Total Operating Expenditures per Capita
Comparison Group Average	\$52.36	\$50.50
State Average (WA)	\$36.92	\$34.42
National Average	\$33.40	\$31.33
RENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, WA	\$27.68	\$26.09
PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM, WA	\$33.70	\$30.04
TIMBERLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY, WA	\$38.44	\$35.21
TACOMA PUBLIC LIBRARY, WA	\$59.38	\$60.11
KING COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM, WA	\$64.47	\$61.35
SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY, WA	\$65.79	\$65.78

National Comparison

Using the NCES statistics, we garnered a sample of 37 libraries that have populations similar to Renton and are situated near a major metropolitan area. For this group, the following statistics are useful.

Library Name	Major City	Population
Altadena Library District	Oakland CA	53,800
Ames Public Library	Ames / Des Moines Iowa	56,115
Arcadia Public Library	Los Angeles CA	55,900
Berwyn Public Library	Chicago IL	54,016
Brookline Public Library	Boston MA	57,032
Cerritos Public Library	Los Angeles CA	54,700
Cook Memorial Public Library	Chicago IL	56,836
Crandall Public Library	Albany, NY	53,621
Des Plaines Public Library	Chicago IL	56,945
Dundee Township Public Library	Chicago IL	54,486
Elyria Public Library	Cleveland OH	56,096
Fayetteville Public Library	Fayetteville / Little Rock AR	58,047
Grosse Pointe Public Library	Detroit MI	53,174
Hempstead Public Library	Long Island NY	56,554
Lakewood Public Library	Cleveland OH	55,365
Longwood Public Library	Long Island NY	57,739
Loveland Public Library	Denver CO	55,905
Manchester Public Library	Hartford CT	55,390
Morrison Reeves Library, In	Dayton OH	54,134
Mount Prospect Public Library	Chicago IL	56,265
Mt Vernon & Knox County Public Library	Columbus OH	56,161
National City Public Library	San Diego CA	57,000
Niagara Falls Public Library	Buffalo NY	55,593
Northern Onondaga Public Library	Syracuse NY	53,454
Pickaway County District Public Library	Columbus OH	53,656
Placentia Library District	Los Angeles CA	53,200
Plymouth Public Library	Boston MA	53,789
Renton Public Library	Seattle WA	55,360
San Rafael Public Library	San Francisco, CA	56,900
Springfield Public Library	Springfield OR	54,788
Tinley Park Public Library	Chicago IL	54,342
Union Free Public Library	Newark, NJ	54,405
Village Of Oak Lawn Public Library	Chicago IL	55,245
Vineland Public Library NJ	Philadelphia, PA	56,271
Watsonville Public Library	San Jose CA	55,300
West Haven Public Library	NYC / New Haven CT	53,004
Wheaton Public Library	Chicago IL	55,416
White Plains Public Library	New York City NY	53,077

Operating Revenue

Library Name	Total Revenue per Capita	Local Revenue	Local Revenue per Capita	State Revenue	Other Revenue	Federal Revenue	State Revenue per Capita
Comparison Group Average	\$52.58	\$2,421,911	\$44.32	\$294,174	\$151,867	\$9,124	\$5.33
State Average (WA)	\$36.92	\$3,924,287	\$34.91	\$23,958	\$152,004	\$12,091	\$0.04
National Average	\$33.40	\$815,539	\$25.65	\$100,758	\$79,584	\$5,194	\$2.99
Renton Public Library, WA	\$27.68	\$1,493,800	\$26.98	\$0	\$38,400	\$0	\$0.00

Total Expenditures

Library Name	Total Operating Expenditures per Capita	Total Operating Expenditures
Comparison Group Average	\$48.86	\$2,670,175
State Average (WA)	\$34.42	\$3,899,870
National Average	\$31.33	\$947,640
Renton Public Library, WA	\$26.09	\$1,444,290

Expenditures for Staff

Library	Salaries & Wages Expenditures	Employee Benefits Expenditures	Total Staff Expenditures	Total Staff Expenditures as Percent of Total Expenditures
Comparison Group Average	\$1,436,967	\$359,082	\$1,796,049	68.6%
State Average (WA)	\$2,770,859	\$730,866	\$3,501,725	65.4%
National Average	\$789,861	\$213,661	\$998,380	64.8%
Renton Public Library, WA	\$904,035	\$204,467	\$1,108,502	76.8%

Staffing Levels

Library Name	Total Staff	ALA-MLS Librarians	ALA-MLS Librarians per 1,000 Population	Total Librarians	ALA-MLS Librarians As Percent of Total Staff	Librarians without ALA-MLS	Other Staff
Comparison Group Average	41	10	0.19	13	25.9%	2	29
State Average (WA)	50	12	0.10	12	15.9%	1	37
National Average	15	3	0.08	5	12.4%	2	10
Renton Public Library, WA	24	6	0.11	6	25.0%	0	18

Library Collections — Print

Library Name	Print Materials	Print Materials per Capita	Current Print Serial Subscriptions	Current Print Serial Subscriptions per 1,000 Population
Comparison Group Average	202,312	3.71	418	7.66
State Average (WA)	266,214	5.98	677	9.96
National Average	88,964	6.50	202	15.07
Renton Public Library, WA	173,248	3.13	438	7.91

Library Collections — Audio Visual

Library Name	Video Materials	Video Materials per 1,000 Population	Audio Materials	Audio Materials per 1,000 Population
Comparison Group Average	12,804	234.36	12,047	219.39
State Average (WA)	14,146	276.40	15,716	188.69
National Average	3,910	285.19	4,255	196.57
Renton Public Library, WA	10,792	194.94	4,423	79.90

Library Collections — Electronic Materials

Library Name	Current Electronic Serial Subscriptions	Current Electronic Serial Subscriptions per 1,000 Population	Electronic Books	Databases
Comparison Group Average	6	0.11	262	27
State Average (WA)	1	0.04	520	12
National Average	6	0.49	861	22
Renton Public Library, WA	1	0.02	0	4

Library Services — Public Service Hours and Visits

Libraries	Average Number of Weekly Public Service Hours Per Outlet	Library Visits	Library Visits per Capita
Comparison Group Average	50	410,173	7.48
State Average (WA)	36	510,315	6.18
National Average	39	147,584	5.77
Renton Public Library, WA	54	N/A	N/A

Library Services — Reference

Library Name	Reference Transactions	Reference Transactions per Capita
Comparison Group Average	62,452	1.14
State Average (WA)	117,902	0.61
National Average	34,523	0.90
Renton Public Library, WA	N/A	N/A

Library Services — Programs

Library Name	Total Library Programs	Total Program Attendance	Children's Program Attendance
Comparison Group Average	1,066	26,092	18,689
State Average (WA)	732	22,273	18,717
National Average	334	7,984	6,068
Renton Public Library, WA	133	14,124	14,124

Library Services — Interlibrary Loan

Library Name	InterLibrary Loans Received	Interlibrary Loans Received per 1,000 Population	InterLibrary Loans Provided	Net Loan Rate
Comparison Group Average	11,237	204.08	10,876	1.44
State Average (WA)	2,628	110.23	2,428	0.76
National Average	3,386	262.76	3,361	1.14
Renton Public Library, WA	347	6.27	2,855	8.23

Library Services — Circulation

Library Name	Population of Legal Service Area	Total Circulation	Total Circulation per capita	Circulation of Children's Materials	Circulation of Children's Materials as Percent of Total Circulation
Comparison Group Average	55,236	595,996	10.88	218,964	35.7%
State Average (WA)	91,580	986,631	9.44	288,292	33.9%
National Average	31,143	223,858	8.30	78,307	36.5%
Renton Public Library, WA	55,360	511,712	9.24	134,846	26.4%

Summary of Comparisons with U.S. Metropolitan Area Libraries

Using the U.S. sample of 37 libraries that have populations similar to Renton and are situated near a major metropolitan area.

	Comparison Group Average	State Average	National Average (WA)	Renton Public Library
Total Revenue per Capita	\$52.58	\$36.92	\$33.40	\$27.68
Total Operating Expenditures per Capita	\$48.86	\$34.42	\$31.33	\$26.09
Salaries & Wages Expenditures	\$1,436,967	\$2,770,859	\$789,861	\$904,035
ALA-MLS Librarians per 1,000 Population	0.19	0.10	0.08	0.11
Print Materials per Capita	3.71	5.98	6.50	3.13
Video Materials per 1,000 Population	234.36	276.40	285.19	194.94
Average Number of Weekly Public Service Hours per Outlet	50	36	39	54
Total Library Programs	1,066	732	334	133
Total Circulation per Capita	10.88	9.44	8.30	9.24

Summary of Major Comparative Factors and Gaps Between Renton and Others

Identification of gaps

For the most relevant summary comparison, we return to comparing Renton Public Library with our sample of libraries in Washington communities with similar populations, plus those Renton compared itself with in the past — a total of seven libraries. While the Renton Public Library population in 2004 was 55,360, the average for the comparison group was 55,661.

With rapid growth and the annexation of Benson Hill, Renton's population recently jumped to over 76,000. Renton's additional Potential Annexation Areas could add population of approximately 45,000 in the following numbers: East Renton Plateau (including Briarwood and Maplewood Heights) — 8,700; Fairwood — 21,856; and West Hill (including Skyway, Bryn Mawr, Lakeridge, Campbell Hill, & others) — 14,300. (City of Renton website). If all these areas annex to Renton, the Renton population would soon be over 120,000. In the context of both annexations and in-city population growth, we believe library services should be planned for a population of 150,000.

Library Name	Population of Legal Service Area
Comparison Group Average	55,661
State Average (WA)	91,580
National Average	31,143
Renton Public Library, Wa	55,360
Mount Vernon City Library, Wa	27,720
Puyallup Public Library, Wa	35,690
Richland Public Library, Wa	42,660
Longview Public Library, Wa	49,740
North Olympic Library System, Wa	65,900
Bellingham Public Library, Wa	71,080
Everett Public Library, Wa	96,840

Based on the statistics presented earlier for Renton compared to these seven Washington public libraries, we can summarize how Renton compares in library resources and services. The gap in many areas between Renton and these other libraries is pronounced. Renton lags far behind in the resources available to provide library services to city residents. Renton has considerably less library revenue and therefore has less to spend on materials, staff, and programs. A dramatic example is the huge gap between the number of programs offered in Renton and those offered at other libraries. Renton is 68% below the comparison group in total number of programs presented. This gap in number of programs is likely a reflection both of the lack of available staff as well as lack of available meeting space. A summary comparing Renton to the Washington comparison group average reveals the following gaps.

Comparing Renton to this Washington State sample of medium sized communities, the Renton Public Library is:

- 30% below the WA comparison group average in Total Revenue per capita
- 32% below the WA comparison group average in Total Operating Expenditure per capita
- 24% below the WA comparison group average in Salaries & Wages Expenditures
- 8% below the WA comparison group average in accredited masters degree librarians per 1,000 population
- 8% below the WA comparison group average in print materials per capita
- 10% below the WA comparison group average in video materials per 1,000 population
- 6% above the WA comparison group average for the number of public service hours per outlet
- 68% below the WA comparison group average for the total number of programs
- 26% below the WA comparison group average for the total circulation per capita
- 81% below the WA comparison group average for the number of computer databases

Summary Comparison of Renton Public Library to other U.S. Libraries

Identification of Gaps

If we compare Renton to the national group of libraries in similar metropolitan areas, some of the gaps are even larger.

Using a sample of 37 U.S. libraries that have populations similar to Renton and are situated near a major metropolitan area.

Library Name	Total Revenue per Capita	Total Operating Expenditures per Capita	Salaries & Wages Expenditures	ALA-MLS Librarians per 1,000 Population	Print Materials per Capita	Video Materials per 1,000 Population	Average Number of Weekly Public Service Hours Per Outlet	Total Library Programs	Total Circulation per Capita
Comparison Group	\$52.58	\$48.86	\$1,436,967	0.19	3.71	234.36	50	1,066	10.88
State Average (WA)	\$36.92	\$34.42	\$2,770,859	0.10	5.98	276.40	36	732	9.44
National Average	\$33.40	\$31.33	\$789,861	0.08	6.50	285.19	39	334	8.30
Renton Public Library	\$27.68	\$26.09	\$904,035	0.11	3.13	194.94	54	133	9.24

**Comparing Renton to this national sample of metropolitan communities,
the Renton Public Library is:**

47% below the U.S. comparison group average in Total Revenue per capita

47% below the U.S. comparison group average in Total Operating Expenditure per capita

37% below the U.S. comparison group average in Salaries & Wages Expenditures

42% below the U.S. comparison group average in accredited master's level librarians per
1,000 population

16% below the U.S. comparison group average in print materials per capita

17% below the U.S. comparison group average in video materials per 1,000 population

8% above the U.S. comparison group average for the number of public service hours per outlet

88% below the U.S. comparison group average for the total number of programs

15% below the U.S. comparison group average for the total circulation per capita

85% below the U.S. comparison group average for the number of computer databases

These comparisons reveal large gaps in the resources and services that Renton Public Library provides to its community. Analysis of the gaps is essential in developing plans for library services for the future of the Renton Public Library.

RENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY SUMMARY OF ONLINE SURVEY JULY 2007

In an attempt to provide as many opportunities as possible to participate in the Renton Public Library Master Plan Study, an online survey was offered to Renton residents for two weeks in July.

Two hundred-sixty-five individuals responded. Survey respondents were primarily female and frequent library users. The fact that 23.5% of those individuals do not live in Renton suggests a strong cross -use of libraries. Over 90% have Renton library cards while 69.4% have KCLS library cards. 78.9% consider Renton to be their primary library. Over 80% of respondents are over 25.

Those who do not use the Renton Public Library state as the predominant issues: lack of time, inconvenient library hours, and use of another library.

When asked about the services currently offered by the Renton Public Library, respondents favored

- Fiction for adults and children
- Non-fiction for adults and children
- Reference librarians for information or help
- Videos, DVDs and CDs
- Access to the library's catalog by Internet

The most common items that patrons were not aware of included the Pacific Northwest collection, wireless internet in the library and research databases. Over 54% of respondents were not aware of the databases.

When asked which services respondents would like to see added or continued, respondents favored fiction and non-fiction for adults and children, computers for public use, reference librarians for information or help and research databases available on the library's web site. What they listed as not necessary included 24/7 reference, programs for babies and toddlers, books in languages other than English, and book/movie discussion groups.

Respondents had strong opinions about the RPL facilities. While 39% would like to keep the two branches as they are, there was strong favor for remodeling both branches and adding study and program space.

Answers to Open Questions

Hours

More open hours, particularly on Fridays and Sundays

Story time one Saturday so working parents can take the kids.

Technology

More public access computers, with one hour time slots, divided into adult and youth sections. More WiFi access and iPods to check out.

Classes

ESL, basic computer software usage, CPR, and a class on using reference and recommended publications, e.g. consumer digest, financial, etc.

Materials

Downloadable books

Music CDs

Career education

Books in other languages for non-English speakers and more and updated materials for learning English

Online foreign language teaching from Rosetta Stone

Fiction in large print

Information that is useful for small office/home office businesses to assist them with marketing and sales

A more prominent "this is how your government works" section where adults can get information on becoming a citizen, registering to vote, how and where to go to Council meetings, etc. Perhaps within exhibits, there should be more of a tie-in with local history/Renton Museum, the school district, and perhaps local businesses to deliver timely and relevant information about past and current happenings.

Databases

Topics: genealogy, legal and business news, real estate maps, Sanborn fire insurance maps, native vegetation, noxious weeds, black history, health, family life, investing, auto mechanics, J-Stor

I would like to know about what is available.

The repair manuals were so vague as to be worthless.

The databases are frustrating to me because it is misleading about what items are actually available

at the specific location that I am at. I waste a lot of time sifting out books and reference material that the library does not even carry.

Would like to see Renton library match selection offered by King County Library System, especially their genealogy databases with off site access.

RPL does have all of the databases I use most frequently for work and personal research, so I think that what is currently available is great.

Programs

Free support type group meetings in private rooms available: grief, care-givers (spouse and adult-child, widows/widowers), 12 step recovery, book-clubs, writing/poetry groups. Nothing that is run by a professional or charges money to attend.

Monthly creative writing/poetry reading.

More cultural interaction — possibly even groups meeting to assist with language learning — I would love to learn more Spanish, and know it would be helped by attending a conversational group.

Book discussions at the Highlands Branch

Facilities

Small coffee bar and a “drinks permitted” section of the library

Book mobile to come to lodge on Eagle Ridge Road.

Meeting space

Study rooms

More privacy when using computers

More branches

Study carrels at the Highlands branch.

Highlands branch expanded back with a sunroom like the Renton Senior Center to give more natural light and more reading and book space

Services

Help in getting adults to get continuing ed/get back to college

Homeless referral services/possibly police — to keep homeless from using library as a refuge only to sit — not to discriminate but to see fair use to all w/o misuse

“Share Your Knowledge” phone book. It is 2007 and everybody loves talking on the phone.

Example: I am interested in quantum mechanics but not enough to do a full scale study so...I pickup my phone book and call someone who loves to talk about it.

A paid service where books could be delivered to people’s homes. The person using the service should pay for it.

Email communications, notices prior to due date
Self checkout

Just a note about exhibits — I think they are important to the atmosphere of the library and as a public draw. However, they should be very high quality or else not done at all. I do not like to see Puyallup Fair quality exhibits.

More prominent community boards available for use at the library. I would like to see them in the lobby areas at eye level (not near the floor where they are currently).

More book sales

Other

Join King County Library System

Join the K.C. Library System with no restrictions.

Programs and Services for Youth

Some programs that really interest youth on popular current topics and events that are new and innovative and open to real help and education.

Anything useful to keep kids off street like contests, activities of interest to them to encourage learning

Post recommendations for children’s books

Students school art or science projects displayed for 1-2 weeks, their own creative writing/poetry reading night (monthly?) All age levels.

Good medical, physical, and metaphysical lecturing program that fully covers all aspects of drugs and alcohol stimulation and effects. Healthy eating, anti-smoking, sex education, time management, loitering, anti-slurs. Weight management, time management

Book clubs where school age kids can read the same book together and meet to discuss it (with an adult moderator). Or maybe a mother/daughter or father/son reading group.

The biggest hole I see is reference materials for their school projects as well as the non fiction selection for young adults. That is what I use King County for the most.

Book/movie discussion groups at Library.

Homework help centers, ESL classes

Read books to kids! More teen fiction books

A summer camp program to keep their minds ready for the next school year incorporated with fun activities on the grounds

Year long reading incentive program

A youth computer desk would be welcomed... computers with 'net safeguards' and limited access to kids who are supervised from 2 to 12, and 13-18 unsupervised.

Any service(s) that stirs the imagination and interest of our youth is by far preferable to the trouble they find on their own. A book/movie club, a computer club, a chess club, a media club where teens can learn about making movies, photography, recording music.

Offer life skills classes that show youth how to find what they need in the way of reference materials to find a job, pay taxes, research things on the Internet. I also really liked a presentation that the downtown Seattle library did on Zines.

Offer a teen summer reading program

Reading/discussion groups for school-aged thru adults, tutoring programs for school aged, quiet room

Library tours (mini-tours) (map layout on the wall)

Sign-up classes for parents with their children.

Music classes for children.

Sports reference lists

I know of very few programs for school-aged children, other than summer reading programs, and those seem aimed at younger kids.

Anything — there really are good kids out there with no where to go and no one who cares — a library can be a safe place for them (I do realize it's not the libraries job to care for them — but they need somewhere and where better then somewhere they can mentally explore somewhere/something/being someone else).

Try and get at least three or more copies of each book so we will not have to wait as much to get the book we want if it is already checked out.

Bilingual children's books

Comments on Facilities

Current Branches

Keep branches separate but do some upgrades

Unless more room is needed, then a remodel of both libraries could be considered.

Both libraries need to be updated. Both current

locations are good, though Highlands suffers from being oddly situated in my opinion. I would think to serve the Highlands Community more effectively as the community spreads eastward, the location should be on Union near the Honeydew Elementary School. Perhaps new branches for the Renton Library System could include a Kenndale Annex, a far east Renton Plateau branch (or a RTC branch), or Benson Hill branch combined with a new fire station 13? Meeting and study rooms would be nice, as the current facilities are not welcoming for these uses, though study can be accomplished; it is more difficult when other events are going on, such as kids' story time.

I am not certain whether the buildings should be relocated/updated/brand new, but they do need to be seriously updated to reflect the trends in libraries that have occurred over the years: meeting rooms, classrooms, and a separate computer area. The current libraries look dated.

Highlands

The Highlands Branch is loved and needed. Much of the Highlands is along NE 4th with many new neighborhoods out that way and many being built or annexed. Just make it bigger. A larger library is needed in the Highlands as the volume of people in that area continues to expand rapidly. A larger library could hold a larger collection of books and provide computers for use by students from numerous schools in the area.

The Highlands library needs to be built a bit further away from the main branch, maybe further up Sunset or on 4th, where most of the homes are. Maybe the present Highlands library can be a technical processing location, allowing for more room at the main branch.

The Highlands Library is too small for the explosion of development that has been going on. It needs to be bigger.

The Highlands library should be a top priority for the Renton Public Library. It is in dire need of an expansion with more shelf space and definitely more computers. In addition, the main branch needs to maybe triple the number of computers and expand their collection even more.

Downtown

Remodel the downtown library as much as possible. There is no room for meeting rooms in all facilities.

I think the downtown library should stay at its present location, but be remodeled to accom-

moderate more computer and more shelf space for books. Leave the downtown branch on the river. This is a great location, very interesting to walk over and float under. Could expand it into the parking lot and use the parking lot of the next building next door.

The downtown library could use a cheap sprucing up — but the focus should be delivering a broad range of books to the community. Keep the focus on being a library — and do not get distracted on beautification, internet, programs etc. Longer hours would be nice!

I really like the Downtown library's location and I love that it is over the water. However, the library is somewhat drab & could be made more appealing to want to spend time in.

Please keep the Downtown library where it is — I love the location on the bridge by the park! I LOVE the current location of the downtown branch! It is unique and is great to show visitors from out of town. If it could just be remodeled/updated by adding meeting rooms and study rooms, additional cozy places to sit and read while still being kept over the Cedar River, that would be awesome. It would be great to see the facade of the building get a facelift; something that updates it with a more timeless, charming, classic look.

I think the main branch should stay at its present location at all costs, but maybe restructure the way services are provided there to maybe add more space. In addition, if the Highlands library is rebuilt and enlarged somewhere else, then the building can be used for other services, such as cataloging and mending.

Make the newly remodeled library more comfortable. Take for example, the Starbucks mentality of 'second place'. The RPL, could be that 'second place'. By using comfortable furniture, better lighting, more user friendly computers (to find books), devoting specific areas (with comfortable reading couches) just for reading, and enticing community programs (computer classes, community classes on just about anything, talks by authors — instead of having many authors which people might not go to, spend the time and effort on having one or two high profile speakers come), art and/or environmental exhibits (i.e. team up with organizations who help promote the health of the Cedar River) are just a few things that could happen. The RPL has so much potential. It already is a great library, but it could be so much more. Please give Renton a library that it can not only be proud of, but one

that the community will want to patronize.

I have been coming to the downtown public library since I was a child and have always loved it. However after living out of state and experiencing other libraries I have come to realize that the Renton Public Library (RPL) has the potential to be a much better library. A downtown remodel is key (a new library would be fantastic, but the current location — over the river, is extremely unique, and should be kept). The library is outdated and needs a change.

KCLS

Remodel existing library buildings, then annex to KCLS.

Become fully part of the King County Library System. Benson Hill Communities Annexation area residents pay \$150 for every \$21 paid by Renton Residents for library Services. Both can use the KCLS fully. Adding 17,000 people to Renton will eventually result in a change to the reciprocal use agreement and Renton residents "free ride" on using KCLS services. I want to remain fully part of the KCLS that I have supported through taxes and levies. Using the monies from the levies passed by the proposed annexation area residents to maintain or improve Renton City library services is unfair. It takes the levy monies we voted for and moves it to support Renton City Library service, expansion plans, etc. Those on the hill, like myself will continue to use KCLS and not Renton Libraries. It seems to be an unfair use of our tax and levy money earmarked for KCLS to improve the Renton Library System that we will not use or support.

Other Locations in Renton

Would use a Highlands branch weekly if it were on or very near the Cemetery Rd (128th) corridor. The current location is off the beaten path for me.

Build a branch in the Talbot Hill area.

A new one in the Valley Medical Center Area.

New libraries should be in the middle of higher density neighborhoods, preferably with food or coffee shops within easy walking distance.

If it were more cost effective to tear down and replace rather than remodel I would do what is most cost efficient.

Additional branches: south Renton, west Renton Fairwood/Benson Hill area

There are no services to the south end of Renton. I would like to see a library in the Benson Hill area.

We use the Fairwood library more often because it is closer to us than the downtown one.

If large areas annex, have branches in those areas (former KCLS libraries or new).

I do not support taxes for any of the above.

I will be relocating to the Renton area in six months or less and think it would be cost effective for the Renton Public Library system to remodel the existing two buildings then become a part of the King County Library system. I have lived in a community where the library and community center were combined and the noise level was so great that I drove across town to another library to have peace and quiet.

Value of the Renton Public Library

Very friendly and sized right to keep family atmosphere; not intimidating.

I cannot afford to buy as many books as I read. The library is a Godsend

I love to read and am beginning to enjoy more DVDs. The Renton library is close to my home, easy to use (though access was a problem when I could not walk far for a time). The librarians are friendly, helpful, and recognize me. I like the fact that it is one story and not too large. I can stop in the vestibule for the free newspaper.

There are materials available for the family and especially for the scholarly. All the staff are wonderful except one woman staff who was hostile once.

I do not. I tried to use the Renton Libraries in High School and was turned away. I could not use them as a youth, yet Renton residents have enjoyed both systems at 1/7 of the cost. It may be a good deal for Renton Residents, but it is unfair. I also believe that taking 17,000 residents and the Library taxes from KCLS, putting them in Renton and allowing them to still have complete access to KCLS fully is not sustainable. KCLS is there to deliver the best product to their customers and their customers pay for it. Renton does not. For these reasons, the Renton Library System is not a good value for my children or me. I certainly do not want Renton Library System to take over the KCLS Fairwood Library as part of its Master Plan.

It is convenient to where I live and it has a nice personal touch that King County does not always have. Obviously, King County, being one of the largest libraries in the country, has a vast collection that Renton cannot hope to compete with, and I do use it more (I especially like their theme kits for

children). However, I like having the ability to use both libraries.

The Highlands library is convenient and provides most services that I need from the library. I like it because there is access to materials from both libraries and I can save gas and time by picking up my selections at this location. Please do not move it off the hill.

The staff at the Highlands Library are so personal and very helpful. I go in daily and they are always pleasant and know me by name. It is that kind of daily interaction that makes we want to come back to the Highlands library.

It is a wonderful place for me to bring my grandchildren. I love checking out books to bring over when I babysit.

I would much rather use the Renton Library if you would join the K.C. Library Association. I get a lot out of their inter-library loan and they are very helpful. I can order my books on my computer at home.

We love the librarians. Libraries are so automated now that we lost that personal touch. The Highlands Library does a great job of helping people so they want to keep coming back. They have been GREAT with my kids. King County has lost that feel.

The Renton Public Library is a big part of my life. I go to find information on all sorts of topics history, travel, animal care, cars, decorating, crafts, biographies, etc.... In addition, I have found new authors to enjoy. For me, the library has opened my mind and imagination to the world.

I love the way RPL has librarians who seem really interested in helping and enthusiastic about their work. I love the fact they know the collections well and are interested in providing a high quality of individual service. I love the way the children's librarian loves to connect kids to books and takes an interest in them as individuals.

It has a lot of books! For the budget that it gets - the Renton library should be commended for not getting distracted by the pet cause of the year. ESL programs are important, but typically, the foreign language book section had devolved into a "La Raza" section.

The nice, super nice people who work there and convenience to home and work.

Easy to access; good collection for size of the city.

Location; convenient public computers; great access to adult fiction and non fiction; good open hours.

I use many libraries (KCLS, Seattle, libraries in other cities and countries) and I appreciate the old-fashioned “library-like” atmosphere of the Renton Public Library — quiet, no cell phones. I use the NW collection quite a bit and find it a unique and useful resource.

I use the county system more often, but am always grateful for the reciprocal agreement between the county and Renton libraries. I almost always am able to get a new, popular book from Renton first.

Has been a great place for the kids to expand their love of reading.

The quietness and peacefulness of the library over the river and adjacent to the park.

Highlands is extremely convenient to me. I really enjoy the physical plant downtown, as well as the PNW collection.

The Renton Public Library is of value to me because I have a young toddler & we really enjoy story time. I think this could really foster wonderful memories for him & a desire, as he gets older, to read books and utilize the library system.

Firstly, I love that it is a small library system. I love that there is not a huge central administration dictating what all of the other branches are to do. I also love that despite its size, RPL has quite a collection! I can get just about anything I would get at KCLS at RPL and the wait is always much shorter.

It is a public living room in a beautiful setting. Recommend converting existing bridge building into an Environmental Center focusing on the Cedar River, the native peoples who lived and fished along its shores, and the salmon who still return yearly to spawn along its shores.

Unlike at the KCPL, I can get recently published materials quickly — Yahoo! And I love being able to bring my kids here to pick out books.

It's a rock solid education center

We can combine errands for the household, home-based business and school in one area of the city and obtain a good workout in the process. We either take the bus or walk to do errands, ride our bicycles or drive and park our car then walk everywhere.

Presently, the link to the King County Library System through Renton's PL is extremely valuable to us. Although sometimes not as convenient as the local library, the ability to use the KCLS makes the Renton system very strong.

Kids spending time there shows community has a

chance to survive the future. Anyone seeking to improve their knowledge can access it and get helpful info and perhaps improve their lives, making them less likely to fall into poverty, ignorance, or despair.

It improves the quality of life for the citizens of Renton by allowing them the resources to educate, enlighten, and entertain themselves.

It is easier to use than the King County Libraries. Although the collection is not as extensive, it is fairly current and more accessible — I generally don't have to wait as long for the titles.

The green movement is making borrowing-free-cycling more popular. The library provides a lot of services that can be reused over and over.

It is a central unifying [place] for a segment of community not necessarily using other facilities.

It is a FABULOUS service. I couldn't live without it!!!!!!

RPL is and has been for over 25 years my favorite area library. Even when I did not live in Renton my mother and I would drive from Kent to use the fine PNW section. RPL is a gem of a library. Its librarians are great. It has a fine collection of new books both fiction and nonfiction.

Its prominence in the city of Renton, the programs that they have supported and made available for so many years, and the fact that the librarians know the patrons/customers. Even though I'm 22, the librarian who used to do the story time when I was little still always says hi to me and remembers me and my brother and sisters.

It is a source of information that cannot be found in any other one place. Here any one can come and all have freedom to improve themselves regardless.

Knowledge is power, the more you know the more you grow as a person. What other place can you totally immerse yourself into another world, another culture, if you are not checking out a book at the library. What would society be, if we didn't know anything?

Everything about the Renton Public Library is something of value. It has great staff, books, movies, and internet use.

For adolescents, it provides a place of shelter from the outside world. For adults, it provides a quiet place to learn. Anyone can pick up Living on the Cedar and other local publications, too!

A library makes a statement about the community that uses and supports it. It should be both

dynamic and interactive to encourage learning. It should also be a central part of the community where knowledge is shared, new friendships are made, and old ones strengthened.

Every community needs a library and every large residential area needs at least a storefront branch. I think the online access and interbranch book transfer is very useful.

The city of Renton having its own independent library contributes more to a sense of community than being part of the KCLS would. It lets people feel like they're really part of the City and provides them with books and learning materials and great

children's story times, and a friendly and helpful staff make it a good place to bring the whole family.

This is a wonderful place, in a great location for people to come and gather things they need to enhance their lives, especially books.

I just think that RPL, being a smaller system, is awesome because the patrons get more individualized attention. We feel welcomed and at home. It's not run like a business, it's run like a library! That's a rare find these days. I've worked in and visited a lot of libraries and my downtown Renton branch is my absolute favorite. I feel very fortunate.